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*SHERBURNE
INHERITANCE*

AMANDA M. DOUGLAS



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A SHERBURNE INHERITANCE

THE SHERBURNE SERIES.

SHERBURNE HOUSE.

LYNDELL SHERBURNE.

SHERBURNE COUSINS.

A SHERBURNE ROMANCE.

THE MISTRESS OF SHERBURNE.

THE CHILDREN AT SHERBURNE HOUSE.

SHERBURNE GIRLS.

THE HEIR OF SHERBURNE.

A SHERBURNE INHERITANCE.

A Sherburne Inheritance

BY

AMANDA M. DOUGLAS

AUTHOR OF "SHERBURNE HOUSE," "LYNDELL SHERBURNE,"
"A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD NEW YORK," ETC

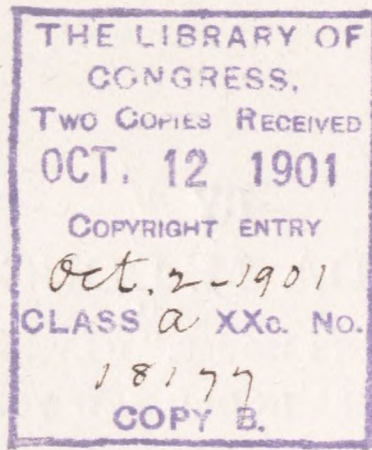
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TO
EMMA H. D. SMITH.

Life is made up of many little threads, let us weave them day by day, into the chain of duty, love, and high endeavor, so that the whole fair piece of workmanship may be approved by the Great Inspector.

A. M. D.

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A Sherburne Inheritance.

CHAPTER I.

A HOME-COMING.

“**T**HERE is no country like your own. There is no place like home. How many thousands of people do you suppose have reechoed the sentiment,” and Lyndell Carew smiled as she turned a bright, tender face to her husband. “We have been ’mid pleasures and palaces, ’mid the hopes and the work of a great world. We are not the only country that is making rapid strides, but our own seems best to us if it is not greater. I do suppose nations get fitted to their environment. But when you leave the wide ocean and enter this beautiful bay, and see all the busy whirl in the distance, the city of one’s home, that holds its heart’s dearest treasures ——”

She was out of breath with her rapid talk, and a throb of emotion sped along every nerve. So many things might have happened to make it a less joyous home-coming. The great steamer floated majestically. There was Liberty with her hand pointing upward. There was the busy city, a mass of spires and points and domes in half-veiled glamour and softly glowing tints, the rare lights, the tremulous shadows of the sunset of a dying summer.

"But you do not regret going?" Dr. Carew recalled her half-heartedness and her hesitation about leaving the children, her anxiety the first few weeks they were abroad.

"Regret! It has been delightful. I would not blot out one day."

"And I have had you to myself," smiling a little and taking her hand that lay on the rail.

"We have had each other," and a limpid softness illumined her eyes. "We both seem so much engrossed at home. Do we take up too many things?"

A thoughtful line crossed Lyndell's brow.

"I do not think I should have enjoyed a narrow woman, and oh, Dell," laughing with almost boyish gayety, "the narrow woman would not have enjoyed me. I often think, dear, how wise and generous and patient, yes and self-sacrificing you have been. And this has proved a red letter holiday for me, a going back to old times and the love of youth. It is good to have a glimpse of the earlier life. We shall be strengthened for whatever comes in the future."

"Bertram," and an exquisite touch of something, not sorrow or fear, hardly apprehension, crossed her face; "we seem to stand at the parting of the ways. Are we really getting to be middle-aged? Our babies are even outgrowing childhood. They will be men and women in such a little while. We shall have to go down the other side——"

"Don't start now," he drew her closer. "Let us stand on the hilltop a long while. It is such a coign of vantage. You have the girl's bloom and eagerness—yes you have gone back five good years since we started."

"Thank you." She made a charming inclination of the head. "You must be idle indeed when you have time to think up compliments."

"We ought to have some seal to affix to this last day. Have I been so chary of compliments?"

"You have never been chary of the truest, sweetest appreciation a wife can have," raising her eyes alight with content.

They were standing unmoved with the bustle all around them, the excitement of travelers getting in, the breathless amazement of newcomers to a strange land, the indifference of the floating pilgrims of fashion who were ever seeking something new, who had seen everything and were alike bored at home and abroad.

"I carry so many pictures of you in my heart," in the low tone that seems to linger among the remembrances of the past. "The first time I saw you—why I can shut my eyes and feel the soft girl fingers over them, and your voice as you bade me guess——"

Dell's face was scarlet with a girl's flush. Then she laughed.

"I thought your father's son was only a big boy. And I had seen *him* sit there so many times."

"And father had always called you a little girl. First and last I had a good many guesses about you," smiling, "and the time we were fighting for Leonard's life! I think I fell in love with you all along. I keep on falling in love. This has been a new wedding journey,—all to ourselves."

It was odd, when they came to think of it, how little of their life had been solely for each other. Perhaps all the larger lives were so. Her eyes grew grave and deep with emotion, and still held their soft, rich brown tint. Lyn-dell Carew had reached the fine levels of womanhood where youth still lingers and its sun is at the zenith. She had been very happy, not perfectly so, for no life is perfect in its bliss. And though the glamour of romance

illumines the love of youth with its almost incredulous rapture of possession; deep and strong natures come to know something finer when the dross has burned out.

When the plan was first proposed, and Dr. Carew had been appointed a delegate to a medical session abroad, Lyndell found a dozen reasons for not going. But Millicent Drayton had helped overrule the objections.

The year had held many trials for Lyndell, and the buoyancy of her nature seemed waning. She had been fighting, too, against the inevitable. In her inmost soul she had mapped out her first-born's life, for Randolph's vigorous cry had reached her ears while the little baby-girl lay gasping for breath. He had been his grandfather's delight, his father's pride. A fine, manly little fellow, stout and sturdy, with no girlish ways or prettiness, a boy of boys; a little careless and rough at times, full of sport and anxious to excel, affectionate, yet preferring his own sex. The twins might have been years apart for any similarity. Even now Millicent, slim, fair and unformed, did not look a day older than Honor. Indeed, they often were mistaken for the twins. Millicent had always sheltered herself under grandmother's wing, as all the children called Miss Carew. Dell seldom interfered, for she could trust Aunt Neale's wisdom. Then Honor had been such a joyous, rollicking baby, such a bright, saucy, impetuous little girl, full of mischievous daring. Lyndell often thought she saw herself reproduced in her. She wanted to think, she did persuade herself that Millicent resembled her dearest cousin, Mrs. Drayton. Then had come Reese, who was a counterpart of his father except that he had his mother's lovely brown eyes. Afterwards the first deep sorrow of her life, when she had laid another baby boy in his narrow bed and kissed him for the last time, finding comfort and

strength in the human love of her husband and the divine love of God.

The household altar had another blossom laid upon it, to the great joy of all. Florence was the family darling, a bewitching little fairy that bid fair to inherit the Sherburne beauty. Lyndell had lived in her lovely garden of young souls, trying to train and shape, having theories as all mothers do, finding unlooked-for traits, comparing notes with Millicent Drayton, and amused with Nora Malory's little host that seemed to flourish without any especial training like a field of wild flowers.

She had a new element when Sherburne and Bertram Beaumanoir entered their borders. Bertram was a born student, eager, industrious, enthusiastic. Sherburne had idled away his winter, indulged in wayward tempers and fancies, but his manly decision during his father's illness had delighted them all; and the fine accord into which he was growing with his parents, gave Lyndell hope that her own boy would be moved so to do.

Because he knew the hurt he would give them, Randolph rarely mentioned his own desires. He hated to pain his grandfather, whose favorite he had always been since childhood.

"Don't urge him," pleaded the elder man. "He might take it up if his heart was not elsewhere, but he has no real love for our profession."

"I'm going to be a doctor," declared Reese, "and we don't want two in the family. Grandpapa, you will have to take me for your boy."

"And what will papa do?"

"Why you see it will be right in the line."

"There will be an old doctor and a young doctor and a middle-aged doctor. Reese, people will begin by telling you you are not half as good a doctor as your father."

"Well—I don't expect to be at first."

"And you may have to go out West or somewhere."

"I'm going to stay just here with you and papa."

The brown eyes glanced up resolutely, and the boy's young arms were clasped about his grandfather's neck.

Early in the autumn Miss Carew decided to go to Virginia. Everybody opposed at first. But Judge Beaumanoir and his wife came up to the city, and though she was so gentle she was very resolute, too. She wanted to see the old place once more, to greet a few of the old friends who were dropping out so rapidly. Was there another presentiment?

They let her go reluctantly, yet there was no reasonable objection.

"Will you stay a month?" asked Millicent. "I shall miss you so. I shall have no one to talk over my troubles with," declared the young girl.

"As if a young thing like you, with affection on every side, ought to have any troubles."

"Not real troubles, but just little things. Honor laughs at them," and Millicent gave as much of a pout as her pretty mouth would allow.

"I am afraid I have spoiled you, Milly. If I hear a bad account of you I shall stay two months."

"O, grandmamma! Whatever should I do!"

"There is so much to do. You are backward in your studies. Honor will be ahead of you everywhere."

"I don't like study, at least, nothing but music. And I'm not going to college as Honor declares she is. I just want to be somebody's girl all my life long; have some one love me best of all. You do, grandmamma?" in a pleading tone.

Aunt Neale kissed her tenderly. She was so unlike the little girl Dr. Carew had brought her from Sher-

burne House, ill and full of very real troubles. Millicent was sweet and clinging; the child Lyndell had shown that she could stand alone. Bertram had been strong and manly all his life. Perhaps Millicent's twin had taken the strength of character and left her the winsome refinement.

They all missed grandmamma dreadfully. Millicent used to go to the lonely room and cry, but she never told any one. She was slow in her studies, and it rather annoyed her mother. Reading and music were her delights, and she could repeat poetry by the hour.

"And then you say you can't remember things!" Honor would rejoin impatiently. "You won't apply yourself. You idle away your time dreaming over vague music or verses full of tragedy. What do you suppose you will do with real, earnest life?"

"What will you do with it?"

There was an almost helpless expression in the elder's face, and it had the hesitation of fifteen. She felt as if blown upon by a strong wind, and inwardly protested against being forced another's way, yet she seemed to have no definite way of her own.

"I'm going to do something with it. I just hate your negative characters!" said the girl, with the swift current of positive and unreasoning youth in her veins, and that enthusiastic pulse of life that believed all things possible. "I may write a book some time—it won't be full of beauty like every line of Aunt Millicent's, but strong, and cutting down deep among the real things. I may be a college professor, for I am going to college——"

"And what else?" as the pause seemed long and suggestive.

"I may be a lawyer—women are coming to the front in that line, and Uncle Len said I had a logical mind.

There are plenty of things to do. Why don't you rouse yourself and consider some of them?"

"Because I like quiet and softness and harmony and leisure, and the tender side of life, the beauty as well. If I could have my wish out of all the world ——"

"O, could you centre your wishes on one thing? Condense; that is better, you revolve around a centre."

"And I don't want to revolve. Yes—I'd like to be so handsome that people would turn around and look at me."

Honor laughed with merry mockery. "Bud will take the family inheritance, it was saved for the last one. I am afraid it has rather thinned out in this generation. Hope Drayton will be lovely, and Cousin Nora has some pretty children, but Aunt Violet took the largest share. I'd rather be fine looking, like mamma, than beautiful like Pearl Amory. What does she do with her beauty but just set herself up for admiration!"

There was a touch of scorn in the strong young voice.

"I don't care so much for the admiration, but I should like to *feel* beautiful, through and through."

"Better wish for good common sense, and go at your lessons with some earnestness," advised the younger.

They were fond of each other, yet they often had little tiffs. Honor was growing into accord and friendship with Randolph. They both desired to be chummy, not sentimental. They confessed their plans to each other secretly, because mamma did not quite approve of the West Point longing, and was not anxious to have Honor choose a profession.

When grandmamma had gone Millicent felt very lonely, quite as if no one really belonged to her. Mamma belonged to them all, papa was a very busy man, but now and then took them all in some pleasure.

There were so many cousins, so much coming and going, so many letters and plans, that every day seemed astir with something new.

Lyndell Carew had been enchanted with the sweetness and mystery of babyhood. Her years of waiting had been years of desire as well. Yet she felt that her life must not be narrowed by the nursery, since there would come a time when the nursery would be outgrown, the blossom season of young lives, and she must garner up wisdom and patience for that period, for she wanted to be the dearest friend in their youth and coming manhood and womanhood. Yet there were times when she questioned her own methods, the results would be so different from what she had anticipated. But she was afraid of too much government. She had suffered so from it in her own girlhood. And Dr. Carew trusted his children even as he had been trusted.

"I half believe there never were any thoroughly good children but Mamma Murray's," Lyndell said once in a mood of discouragement to her husband. "I can't understand what the secret was, but ours have dozens of little faults. When you get one nipped off another springs up in its place."

"As if one ever saw a garden without weeds, and having no need of a gardener!" returned Dr. Carew in his cheery fashion, with the faith of the future shining in his eyes. "As if we with our wider experience did not blunder and make mistakes."

"I suppose I am too impatient for results."

"Do you want them grown up?"

"O no, no. The years go too fast, the lovely, blessed years!" in the passionate tenderness of motherhood.

"We will do our best and trust Providence."

"If we could be sure of our best!"

Week after week went by. Tessy Beaumanoir wrote journal like letters about Aunt Neale. She was going slowly over all the old haunts, she could not stand much at a time. Old friends came in to see her; she was lovely and happy and full of reminiscences about those who were gone. And one day the word came that she had taken the other journey in the same tranquil manner in which she had lived. Sitting out on the porch in the autumnal sunshine she had heard the voice she had tried to follow all through her sweet life, and her spirit arose and went to her new home. They found a smile on her calm white face, and her hands were folded in her lap.

Only the elders went to the burial. Millicent was prostrated by a strange awe. Honor said —

“Mamma—I shall think of her as coming back to us until I am quite resigned. And I will do my best to comfort poor Milly.”

But Millicent did not want to talk about it, and shrank from expressions of sympathy. Lyndell felt in a measure shut out of her daughter's heart. She was sweet and passive, but for a while no one was very gay. Lyndell had many duties and it was not possible to keep her evenings for her family, though she tried to as often as possible. Honor was full of study and ambition, she urged Millicent on to be sure and graduate the coming June with her, though the elder seemed suddenly impassive.

“And then you will be my home girl, Millicent,” said her mother tenderly. “I could not part with you both.”

“Dear mamma,” Millicent murmured. Yet there were four others to share this love. And grandmamma had loved her best, she was sure of that, from the very first day of her life.

One day when all things seemed to have swung back to their olden level, for grandpapa's resignation had been perfected in the confident belief that he should see his beloved sister again in a few years, and the delightful memories he interchanged with Dell were a great solace, while Reese was gently stealing into the place Randolph had grown out of, the proud young fellow came home with eyes alight with pride, and a ring of triumph in his voice that gladdened while it pierced his mother's heart.

"Wish me joy, everybody! I passed all the examinations without a single flaw. I am sound in mind and limb in chest and back, and have the appointment. O mamma, don't feel troubled, there are all the years of training when it will be just the same as if I was in college—well, not quite so many vacations;" with a bright, eager laugh, "but you can run up and see me. And after all I shall never be much beside a fair weather soldier. Wars, you know, are going out of date."

"Of course we can't help being proud," returned his father. "For you might have been knock-kneed or parrot-toed or short-sighted, or had some blemish. And it is *your* life, my boy, that you must live for yourself; let it be brave and honorable and upright, and of service to your fellow-men. That is all the best of us can do."

"It was fine to stand on the topmost round in everything! And to be congratulated, envied ——"

His voice dropped a little. He had come from a wave of enthusiasm, and this was almost a dead sea level. If Honor were only here, and he called her.

"Randolph," said his grandfather, "we are all sure you will make a brave and true soldier. It begins, you remember, the first day you enter West Point, and ends only with your life. For we all take marching orders

from the greater Commander for our whole life, and then it comes down to other officers to whom one must render obedience."

"My boy, I congratulate you heartily, since it is your wish," and Dr. Carew placed his hand on his son's shoulder; glancing out of loving eyes.

"O, Randolph!" exclaimed a glad voice, breaking the tense strain. "Did you get it?"

He took the legal looking envelope out of his breast pocket, his face in a proud glow. His father opened it. Honor had her arm around her brother and gave him a squeeze that went to his heart. Some one was proud of him.

Yes, there was the appointment with the Washington imprint. Honor read while her father was hesitating.

"Sir: You are hereby informed that the President has conditionally selected you for an appointment as Cadet of the United States Military Academy at West Point."

"To think the President does this," she interpolated.

"But it is the same for every cadet. And there is the other examination in June—but then I know I shall pass," and he held his head with soldierly pride already, while his eyes sparkled.

"And when do you go?"

"At the beginning of July."

"O, it is just splendid. I don't want to be a boy, but I shall be proud and glad to have a soldier brother," cried Honor enthusiastically.

After that the talk became general. Then dinner was announced, and Reese added his approval, in a very boyish fashion.

"I'm glad you are so nice and tall and you'll just make a splendid officer."

"If there is anything to be officer of, when I am through," he returned laughingly.

He lingered around that evening and at last found his mother alone.

"Dear mamma," clasping his arms about her neck, "I am so sorry you can't wish me joy and success in my choice. It takes all my heart. I really should not be good for anything else. It would be a fight all my life with myself. And papa consented."

"I am afraid you are looking at it on the romantic side. And oh, Randolph, I *do* wish you success. I shall be glad to have you put your best efforts in the calling since you have chosen it. I cannot be full of joy all at once, but I want you to be happy and lead an earnest, honorable life. You hardly realize what the years will be, for it is no child's play."

"No earnest work is child's play. I have found that out. But I want your love and blessing and your interest while I am away. We have had such a happy life. There isn't any one in the wide world I would change places with, only—we cannot always be children ——"

"My dear boy, no. And no matter what you were, a mother's love could never fail. I dare say some time I shall be proud of your career ——"

There was a little tremble in her voice. He kissed her fondly. As they went on talking she was surprised by his strength of mind and his views of life's purposes and aims. Somehow she had held herself rather aloof the past year, and her conscience upbraided her now. She had shown plainly that his desires were not hers, and he had come to keep them a good deal to himself.

After all, he had been thoughtful not to flaunt them in grandpapa's face and intensify his disappointment. Did

not his hardly nineteen years deserve some credit for bearing with patience the little touches of disapproval they had all given him?

"O, my dear!" she cried with remorseful tenderness, "it is as your father has said—*your* life, and we have no right to turn it awry. If you can do better work on these lines it is our place to stand aside. But you seem so young to make an election."

"Bert Beaumanoir made his younger still," and Dell felt the movement of the smile on the face pressed to hers. "Four years will be long enough to convince me if I have made a mistake."

"But you will owe the country eight years of duty, even if you find —"

"If I have made a mistake, I shall find it out in a year or two. And now wish me Godspeed."

She gave her wishes with all love. A line of Jean Ingelow's ran through her mind —

"To bear, to rear, to lose."

Yet had Aunt Julia lost her son even with all the crosses that had come in his life?

So Lyndell Carew accepted the counter current and turned her barque a little, that she might sail peacefully beside this young life going out on the greater ocean. Was it not what mothers had to do, mothers of sons especially?

The spring had been very full of engagements and business for others, since she would not have been content to narrow her life just to her own household. There were so many charming friends, there were delightful and famous people coming and going continually, there was the college to select for Honor. Millicent would be the home girl.

She was getting very tired and worn, losing her spirit of youth, her husband said, and then he decided to take her away from it all, on a second wedding journey. She began to count up the previous jaunts, and said it was at least the tenth. Why not wait until they had been married twenty-five years and celebrate that? It was so near.

“But I must go to London, you see. And I can’t leave you behind. I don’t dare trust you;” with a merry smile in his eyes and a tone in his voice she understood.

She might have him after all the children had gone out of their lives, she suddenly prayed God to keep them for each other’s old age.

Mr. and Mrs. Drayton came to the rescue. Hope simply adored her beautiful little Cousin Florence. Honor and Reese would make a visit to Virginia. Uncle Archie asked Randolph to accompany him on a tour through the Canadas, and he would leave him at West Point. There really was no valid excuse.

Lyndell felt now that it had been a delightful summer’s recreation. They had hunted up the English cousins that she had met in her girlhood and found them mothers and fathers of families. There had been a brief trip to the Continent. Some time she would take a more leisurely one with her girls.

CHAPTER II.

INNER AND OUTER DISCORDS.

TO get a house settled so that it was full of the spirit of living and not merely furniture, beauty, and good taste; although Lyndell Carew had learned that taste was one thing this year and another thing next, and with a few exceptions the canons were variable. Millicent Drayton was never in a hurry to take up new things; she gave a little touch to the old or changed them about and all was harmony again. Elegant people came and went, poorer but refined people came and lingered, and came again and took home with them some tenderer thought for the class below them. Now and then a pushing person tried to crowd into the higher ranks.

"After all Mrs. Drayton is awfully conservative," some one would say. "She doesn't really help you on in society. You are never invited to meet just the people you want to know. You don't get up into the higher circles."

"Then you should be poor, or a genius; that would appeal to her sense of philanthropy," a friend replied.

"Philanthropy is a great humbug! I want good dinners and elegant receptions, and to meet people it is a pleasure to talk about. But if you take a hand in any great charity, you are dropped when the occasion is over."

Dell wondered at times how Millicent could hold her way so royally, and not make blunders, not bring to-

gether the people who jarred. She did this herself now and then.

"But you are so eager to do good to every one," Millicent replied with an excusing sort of smile. "I take up a few people at a time and study them. I cannot always take them at their own estimate, either. So many people really believe they were born for the grand work of the world. They want to build a fine or beautiful temple without any foundation."

"And some are always laying foundations that no plan seems to fit."

Lyndell Carew gave a short half laugh that had a sound of discomfiture in it.

They were in Millicent's pretty room that was not quite a study, though there were plenty of books in it, and her writing desk was always open, but beside it was her pretty willow work-basket with a bit of dainty airy looking sewing. Lyndell had dropped into the Morris chair. There was a cozy Turkish lounge and several other inviting seats, a grand, shadowy palm in one corner, and a pot of lovely pink carnations that diffused a fragrant odor.

Mrs. Drayton always kept some time for herself, when it was understood that she was engaged. She still did literary work, but she had a graceful kindly fashion of turning over many of her opportunities to younger hands who were overjoyed to find standing room in the great world. Lyndell came in frequently with points to discuss, plans to talk over, and little worries to confess.

Mrs. Drayton raised her eyes and studied Dell with loving sympathy. Then she asked in a half amused tone, "What doesn't fit now? Perhaps your superstructure is too ambitious."

Lyndell looked young and fresh. Her journey with

her husband had done her a world of good. The brown eyes had taken on the brightness of her later girlhood, her complexion was clear and fine with pink tints, and one's first impression was that she was almost at the beginning of life.

"It is your namesake, Milly. I had hoped—" the mother made a long pause. "Milly, did you know just what to do with Nora?"

"No, I did not," with a tender frankness. "You remember we were afraid she might marry wrongly, indeed I felt I was in no hurry to have her marry for years. I wanted her myself. She had grown into such an affectionate daughter and she was fond of the children. Indeed she has—and does seem more like a sister to me. And really, her marriage when it did come appeared to be taken out of my hands. It has been a very happy one, and though Nora hasn't a bit of genius of any kind, she is a delightful wife and mother, and was a lovely daughter to the two old people."

"But she is accomplished and intelligent, quite a superior woman. Well, that ought to give me some comfort;" and her voice had a more hopeful accent.

"Are you in the Vale of Despondency? You really don't look it. And is Millicent—have you come to the time of lovers?"

"Thank heaven, no! The idea of Millicent having a lover!" Lyndell laughed with cheerful amusement.

"What then? It doesn't seem to me that Millicent ought to be a care. She is so sweet and yielding, perhaps has not quite enough self-assertion, and has a most amiable temper. She is very young for her years, but we need not hurry the children into maturity."

"I wish they need not be hurried into anything. I've been so happy with them as little children. Perhaps

I'm not fitted to be the mother of grown up sons and daughters."

There was a sense of discouragement in her tone.

"Lyndell, you have no business with dissatisfaction. Randolph is a son of whom any mother might be proud, or perhaps he would appeal more strongly to a father——"

"But Bertram *was* disappointed," interposed Dell quickly. "Of course he would not confess it."

"Lyndell, do you suppose we have a right to manage our children's lives for the years to come?"

Millicent glanced up with sweet seriousness, yet there was a slight expression of disapprobation.

Dell drew a long breath. "No," she answered candidly. "And after having accepted the fact and knowing that Randolph has started proudly on his new career I ought not refer to it, I suppose. O, Millicent, I am very unreasonable," and a sad half smile crossed her face. "My boy chose his way—I suppose I did keep him out of my confidence, for I hoped the least said about it the better. And I felt sorry for grandpapa, whose namesake he is. But Bertram insists that he would not have made a first-class physician, and he thinks the world is too full of second and third rate doctors. We know what a fiasco Edward Sherburne made. I feel assured if Randolph finds he does not like a soldier's life as well as he thought he will have manliness enough to confess it. But he does love it. In spite of hard training he is full of enthusiasm."

"Then why can you not be satisfied? You have had eighteen happy years of his life, and he has been a brave, fine boy. I hope Carew may do as well. Think of the sons who through later boyhood have given many a heart-ache."

“I ought to be thankful;” and there was a mistiness in Dell’s eyes as well as a tremor in her voice. “And I am thankful. Yet it wasn’t my son I meant to talk about. He has the strong will of the Sherburnes. And here is Millicent grown to womanhood, but a child in heart, with no especial wants or wishes, no strong characteristics, and now what shall I do with her?”

There was a very real anxiety in the face so full of strength and vigor that one would have said in a moment or two she would know what to do with everything.

“With sweet, gentle Milly! Lyndell, what do you want to do with her?” in surprise. “A daughter like that ought to nestle close in the mother’s heart. Why, I can’t imagine a lovelier thing than a grown daughter to share one’s daily life and thoughts and occupations. And since Honor has her mind fixed on some career, Milly ought to be dearer than ever.”

“She is very dear to me,” and now the mother’s eyes overflowed with the real tears. “You know how Aunt Neale claimed her. She said once the second great disappointment of her life was that the doctor’s wife should die so young. She had counted on a family of children and among them one girl she could claim as her very own. It was so queer there should be twins;” and now Lyndell smiled through her tears. “When Honor came I felt she was all mine, and she was a great joy to me. Grandmamma did not spoil Milly, she was always good and sweet and tractable. Randolph seemed to take the strength and wilfulness and love of mischief. They are no more alike than if they belong to different families.”

“Millicent seems two or three years younger than her brother. Yet I think it is a good thing. There is no stage so sweet as this unfolding of girlhood, the first

blossom time of the woman. What about her puzzles you, Dell?"

The tender sympathy in the tone went to the heart of Lyndell Carew.

"A great many things," she returned gravely. "I believe I like strong characters, people who have decided ideas and wants and plans, people that you can help or advise, who can take hold of living with an earnest purpose, who want to do something with themselves. Then there are the people you can lift up and out, and help to develop, but when one is content to stand still and seems to have no aim to life—I think I have inherited a good deal of the Sherburne vim and resolution."

They both laughed at that. To both minds came the remembrance of Dell's early girlhood, the strong hand of Aunt Aurelia, the wilful, ease loving Leonard, taking his own way, the disputes and misunderstandings and obstinacies, and all the imperfections of youth.

"Yes," said Mrs. Drayton presently, "Millicent must be your home girl. And you must not forget, Dell, that she views things with the eyes of youth and inexperience. Didn't you have some vague, wild plans?"

"I believe I did. Every year or two I arranged my life on a new basis, and the real life was different from any of them. It has been very happy too;" a bright color suffusing the face and giving a tender light to the eyes. "But Milly has no plans, no especial desires that I can find out. She has a sweet voice and is fond of music, but is not a musical enthusiast; she has not been a brilliant student I must confess, yet she is a fairly well educated girl, a very good French and German scholar. She paints and sketches without being a genius. She has pretty manners, an extremely amiable temper and is up to the average of looks. She does not care for society;

she is the kind of girl to be generous with her money, to relieve any poverty or suffering that she can without giving of her real self. She will never be a philanthropist. She is just an ordinary girl."

"You cannot have them all extraordinary, Dell. Think of Alice Lepage. We considered her rather weak in character, you know. Did Providence interpose and send her a splendid lover?" smiling a little. "You helped her to discern the true purpose of existence and she has developed into a lovely woman. Ethel had a good deal of character but was supremely selfish, and has made her god society. I think sometimes you lose sight of the fact that all people are not as energetic, as earnest in the work of humanity, and have not your executive ability. We have different gifts. And there are some flowers that are slow in coming into bloom."

"Who was it said that one of the signs of on-coming age was to talk of the past and insist that it was better than the present. When I think of our girlhood it does seem as if it had more real purpose in it."

"All the purposes do not come to light at twenty. Some of the best lie hidden for years. So let Millicent wait a little. Let her have a nice time with young friends."

"But she hasn't any young friends. Honor had the house full of them. They laughed and chaffed and studied, and had dreams and plans, they sang and danced, they had opinions of books and almost quarreled over them. Millicent does not seem to care. I suppose"—rather ruefully—"I ought to give a tea for her and launch her into society. But somehow I don't seem to know many young people."

"Then let us have the tea here."

"I mean the young people I know best are the work-

ers, and I am afraid I could not make a wise selection, even if I could get Millicent interested in them. Then they would not really be society. If she must be ornamental for the next few years she may as well be set in a garden of flowers at once. I want her to be happy, to be useful, to grow, to expand in the channels of true wisdom."

The elder Millicent smiled a little. Lyndell was strenuous and somewhat given to mapping out the lives of others. Often her ways were better, and sometimes when the bitter fruit had been eaten and brought its own suffering the individual came back to her in penitence. There were many people in the world who had to learn by an experience of their own.

It was delightful talking over family relations. What the Amorys were doing, how dear Ray Stanwood had grown to her father, for Aunt Julia had slipped quietly out of life and now they two were alone. But Uncle Archie was taking a warm interest in Randolph Carew, and his enthusiastic letters were a great pleasure. For the young fellow could write more freely to him, since he knew all about West Point life.

"We were just wondering about you, mamma," exclaimed Millicent Carew, as her mother entered the hall. "Luncheon is ready, and for a wonder papa is home. Will you come at once?"

"Yes, dear," said her mother, going up the softly carpeted stairs, while the daughter turned in the opposite direction. Honor would have flung her arms about her mother's neck and kissed her fondly, warmly, and perhaps have been just as effusive to the next comer. Millicent was not demonstrative, though she had loved grand-mamma with the very depth of her soul.

Lyndell Carew was still thinking about her daughter. She was more disappointed than she had confessed to

Millicent Drayton, and sorely puzzled as well. She hated to have this sweet fair girl in the ranks of mediocrity. As she had said she wanted her to have some aim in life, she had half hoped a genius of some kind. There were so many people in the world doing things well, painting pictures, writing verses and stories who would never attain to any great eminence. Still, that was better than no aim. Then there were young women distinguishing themselves on educational lines and works of benevolence. Or if—she shrank from the thought—it was unmotherly and she loved her children next to her husband—nothing could ever rise above that love; if there could be a few years of ardent affection, mother and daughter life, lovely home life, such as there had been with Tessy Beaumanoir.

“Perhaps I have not gone down to the grand secrets of living,” she mused as she gave her hair a pull and a pat, and put on a white mull tie. “I may be too impatient. We do not have everything at once.” But she was feeling as if most things had slipped from her grasp, except her husband’s love.

The dining-room was bright and cheerful with two stands of blooming flowers and the table dainty and refined, with the greenery of delicate ferns at the centre. Dr. Carew glanced up smilingly and gave a slight turn of the head. She came and kissed him.

Florence sprang up and caught her mother around the waist and kissed her rapturously.

“I was afraid you were not coming home. And then I shouldn’t have seen you all day!” said the child in a tone of prospective regret.

“You have large anticipation which is not a good way to measure disappointment,” exclaimed her father laughingly.

"But it's a long day without mamma."

"And you don't often have me at luncheon time," subjoined her father with mock reproach.

"But your plate and napkin ring are there. And sometimes I kiss it good-bye ;" flushing and glancing up shyly.

"It must have a good many kisses saved up for me. Where did you put them when I was abroad ?"

"O, I kept them all in my heart. That's why there were so many of them."

Reese had smiled and nodded. Millicent had glanced up with serene grace. Lyndell poured the tea and said she had spent all the morning with Aunt Millicent. "O, had she seen Hope ?"

"Why no, child, Hope was in school."

"Can I go and see her a little while this afternoon ? just half an hour to practice a duet."

"Yes," answered her mother.

Then the doctor had something to ask about a nurse who was wanted at the babies' hospital. Dell promised to look her up and give the message.

As the talk went on, broken by little interruptions from the children, Lyndell glanced at her daughter furtively, though she would have preserved the same serenity if the glance had been direct. She was fair with pale golden hair and soft brown eyes that had a curious pathos in them, as if there was something in life she had not yet found. They were belied by the complacent little mouth and delicately rounded chin. The forehead was rather low, of the shape one sees in the Clytie and the hair was a little wavy, generally banded lightly above her ears. In some women the straight nose with the thin nostrils would have been haughty. Many a girl with these charms of youth would have posed for a beauty. The

face lacked something—was it animation, earnestness? Honor was less pretty, more piquant, but her face changed with every word, every thought, even if it was not expressed.

“What are you smiling about?” Reese would ask.

“Did I smile? I was only thinking.”

“You do have the funniest thoughts.”

“I am packed full of nonsense inside,” Honor would declare with a laugh.

She had many things beside nonsense in her large, warm heart. They missed her so much. Yes, it was hard to have the children grow up and away from you.

“Milly,” she said half an hour later, “don’t you want to drive over to Miss Aitken’s with me and then to the hospital? Afterwards we might make some calls.”

Millicent had settled herself in her room already and was working on the cover of a sofa cushion. This room in the new house—they had ceased to call it that—had always been hers, and adjoined that of dear Aunt Neale’s. Everything had been kept just the same, and the old doctor often came here for moments of retrospect. Millicent liked the portière to be always drawn so she could glance in, she could cheat herself into believing grandmamma sat there. Timid about some things she had no superstitious feeling here. On the other side a room in which Honor and baby Florence had beds, and now Honor was away and baby Florence was a big girl. Dell was often sorry there was not another baby to fill the place.

The girl glanced up with her needle of bright silk in her hand. There was a vague expression, hardly regret, as she said in a soft tone —

“O, mamma, you know I don’t like hospitals and that sort of thing. And this cushion is for Honor’s Christ-

mas. I want to get it done before I undertake anything else. It will so soon be Christmas. And there are the things for Flossy's Fair. I really haven't time."

"I thought you might like the drive."

"It's clouding up, and I don't believe it will be very pleasant. I oughtn't have been a doctor's daughter and granddaughter."

The tone had a quiet decision in it, and she went on with her work. She cared for so few outside matters. She was not wide in her sympathies.

The mother gave a sigh under her breath and went her way. Yes, Honor had been the leading spirit. Where had she made a mistake in her child's training? What must she do to rouse her? For no human being had any right to lose herself in trifles when there was a great hungry world crying for help of all kinds.

CHAPTER III.

TRYING THE WORLD.

MISS GRACE OLMSTEAD was in one sense a protégée of Mrs. Drayton's. Mr. Olmstead had come to New York on business, and being a widower, had brought his daughter, who had finished her school life. Mrs. Kenneth had known the mother years before, and they had found a pleasant boarding-place for them, though Mr. Olmstead was compelled to be away a good deal.

Between Margaret, Princess and Ruth they had made the young girl feel very much at home. And then she had fallen in love with Mrs. Drayton with the fervor of girlhood.

Mrs. Drayton said to her namesake: "I am going to give a tea for you and Miss Olmstead. You must come in your prettiest gown and most charming manners, and do me credit."

"O, Aunt Millicent, I feel strange in a crowd. I believe I do not really care for society. Everybody seems to have so many ideas and I have so few. I'm not bright and gay like Honor. O, why don't you wait until Honor comes home for vacation?"

"Honor is a schoolgirl still, and you must begin to think that you have some duties to the world. You will be a delightful companion for your mother during these years while Honor is away. And you must make some young friends for yourself."

Millicent did not reply. It was hard to get on with such a temperament, and Aunt Milly understood Dell's disappointment. This was a new characteristic in the family. All the girls had been bright and enthusiastic, eager for fun and frolic, ready for any pleasure.

But there was no possible excuse to be offered. And Millicent Carew looked really pretty in her gown of soft white silk and pale pink roses. Miss Olmstead was dark and scarcely pretty at all, but she had fine eyes and a very vivacious manner. Society ways came natural to her.

Altogether it was a rather brilliant function. When the short winter day drew to a close and the lights added their resplendence, and the young men began to drop in, it was a gay scene. Professor Kenneth and his dainty, pretty wife, Ned Beaumanoir, who was beginning to look almost as wise as the professor, Princess said, and Bertram, who had shot up into a tall young fellow, very good looking, too, if not as handsome as his elder brother, kept up the family dignity he declared. Miss Olmstead was just splendid he thought. Milly was pretty, but she couldn't hold a candle to Honor for fun and good times.

Then there was a dainty dinner for the young people, and a dance in the evening, and so Miss Millicent Carew was drawn into the vortex of society. How could Miss Olmstead be so gay and so pleased with everything! How could Miss Ensign continually take an interest in schools and poor children and concerts and pictures and people of every degree and kind! Aunt Milly was cordial with everybody, it seemed, and Cousin Princess was delightful but really wrapped up in her husband. Bertram was very fond of teasing her, and she was not sure she enjoyed it, for she could never think of anything to say back quick enough to make a point.

Then Honor came home and everything was in a whirl. She was taller, brighter than ever, and in love with college life, adoring her mother when she was not caressing her father. It seemed an overflow of affection.

"Milly, you are cold and stiff," she cried one day. "You haven't a bit of enthusiasm in you. What makes you so queer?"

"I don't know. I suppose I was born so."

"Then I'd be reincarnated! I'd get up some spirit. While everybody else is gay you sit silent as if you didn't quite approve."

"Why—you can all do as you like and laugh as much as you choose. I don't interfere."

"There, I've hurt you, I know. I'm awfully sorry. But I wish you had more real heart in things;" and the younger's voice touched a beseeching chord.

"I can't make myself care for what does not inspire me at all. I wish things did touch me, interest me. I wish I loved fun and thought of merry things to say. Don't be angry, Honor, but sometimes they sound so foolish—tinkling cymbals come into my mind."

"It is the province of youth to be silly. It is the sweetness of it, too.

"Roses are sweet, but they wither and fade,
So will the brightness of youth;
Yet no one cares much for the wisdom of age
With its flavor of ripening truth."

sang the gay girl.

Millicent was looking out of the window. The lot was deep for a city lot, there was an arbor that in summer rioted with bloom, running roses, pink, red and white, and morning-glories in gorgeous coloring. There were two trees, a crab-apple and pear, kept for their profusion of bloom, and the kind of hedge they made at the foot of

the lot, shutting out neighbors. Everything was dry and leafless now, even the grass had a sort of gray withered look. She liked it all the spring and summer ; it was pretty even in the early fall, but now it fretted her, and yet she could not help looking at it. Other things fretted her and she could not help thinking of them, at least she thought she could not.

“Milly, study up and enter college with me. There are so many varieties to girls, they do things from so many motives. And it gives you such grand glimpses of the outside world. I am afraid you will make your life too narrow. I should like to be something—a good deal like mamma, only I am more self-loving. Perhaps, too, that is one of the accompaniments of youth. I want to have a good time as well. Have you decided what *you* want?”

“You know I do not love to study, and am slow at it. I care the most for music, it soothes me ; but I don’t like those noisy things, and to see one’s fingers racing up and down the piano ! ”

“You do play beautifully,” in the pause. Honor felt a little self-condemned. She had found a good deal of fault with Millicent, yet she was glad to praise.

“Yes, take up music with a purpose ——”

“There isn’t any purpose to my life,” fretfully. “I hate to be thinking of purposes and plans. I like embroidery—it just goes on with turnings like a stream running through a vale, in and out, shading itself exquisitely with the trees, the sky, the soft shadows and not rushing off to the sea.”

“You should have been a poet.”

Millicent flushed, then her lip curled in a little disdain. She thought she would much rather be very beautiful.

"Aunt Millicent is the only real genius in the family. I should like to be one. She did not begin very young either. I mean to try for some of the prizes of life. I haven't quite made up my mind. I could travel and write a book. I like all the little things of nature. And I'm very fond of people. It's interesting to watch their faces and listen and guess at their motives. Perhaps I may write a novel some day."

She looked so bright and eager. Her hair was like a ripe chestnut in tint and rippled all over her head. Her eyes were dark and quite indescribable, they had so many colors in them, and her mood seemed to make them brown or blue or black, never one clear color but suggesting it, and nearly always merry, yet they had a resemblance to her mother's.

"Was that papa's voice? He promised I should go out with him. Yes, in one moment," calling down the stairs, and then she hurried into her fur coat, just saying a laughing, "by, by."

Millicent rose, took a book off the dressing-table and another off the chair, and a handkerchief from the bed. How careless Honor was! She had been trained in old-fashioned habits of order and neatness. Grandmamma Carew had never been "fussy." Honor once said everything of hers knew its place and never came out of it. And then old age has so much leisure. Millicent liked the order and harmony and she had grown into settled ways, unusual for youth. And since grandmamma had gone she had come to like her own ways as if she was keeping them in tender reverence of somebody. She thought at times that grandpapa had almost forgotten. She would have liked him to haunt the room, to feel there was nothing quite so dear, but his remembrances were in the old home of their youth and middle life.

For the rest he clung to his son, the tender cheerful physician who could minister to the mind as well as the body, and the next strong affection was creeping into his heart for earnest, enthusiastic Reese.

She sat down with her embroidery. This was a table scarf for Aunt Millicent. She liked it better than painting, it was so clean and neat. She kept her silks straight and they never tangled. She did the wrong side of her work almost as beautifully as the right. In the few things she really loved she was very thorough.

Honor had unwittingly stabbed down to the secret depths in her careless, light-hearted way. She wanted to think it over now. "You should have been a poet." And Honor knew she was not. If she had said, "You *are* a poet," for after all poetry didn't always mean rhymes. No one had ever said that. Their mother had too true an appreciation of real genius to seize on any ardent desire for the gift itself, though if she could have chosen a birthright for Millicent it would have been that.

They had all made rhymes in play, Randolph's generally being of the ridiculous sort. Honor, her mother said, would go half a mile for a rhyme.

"And find it, too," the girl would answer brightly. "You see I don't mind about the feet, for the lines manage to hold each other up."

When grandmamma had gone out of her life and her father and mother were abroad, Millicent had yielded herself to a sweet delusive and yet ambitious dream. Love and sorrow and loneliness stirred the very depth of her being. There was a voice of melody within her that must find words, a power before which she fell into throbs of ecstasy. Everything spoke to her, not in a new tongue exactly, but as if she were empowered to

translate the mysterious depths of the soul. Her brain seemed in a flash of living light. And she wrote—wild, detached verses, tender, pathetic ones, all the longings of love and sorrow, knowing very little about the first, and quite assured in her mind that the second was the true atmosphere of poesy. Many an ardent, imaginative girl has passed through the same experience to be roughly disillusioned by some unnecessarily sharp criticism.

Millicent would have been by far too shy to bring out these phantoms of her brain for any one's inspection. They were really fragments and might have been the kindling of true poetic spirit in some souls with resolution enough to push forward. She wanted to be full grown at once; she lacked perseverance in many things.

They were at the seaside, out on the south shore of Long Island. Mr. Drayton had joined the little household, and added a new zest to every pleasure. He had brought with him a volume of recently published poems whose author by a rare charm, strong, vivid, tender, had made his mark on the hearts of the cultured reading public by his simplicity at once felicitous and touching.

The elders were in a little group on the sands. Soft grayish white clouds went drifting about the sky, deepening in the west where the sun was obscured. The tide had turned and was coming in with the slow monotone that was almost like an accompaniment to the well trained and sympathetic voice.

Mr. Drayton closed the book presently. His small audience had been deeply moved.

"That is true poetry," he said, "not the singing of an idle voice for mere pastime. If ever I wrote verses I should want them of the finest order, at least if I expected to offer them to the world and truly cared for approval."

“They are exquisite,” said his wife, “full of power and sweetness.” Then she smiled a little. “But I remember a time when you were quite sure *I* could write poetry because I had an inspiration in a little cradle song.”

“I think I have amply redeemed that error of judgment and loving partiality,” he returned. “One can excuse lovers for all manner of nonsense so long as their lucubrations are not given to the public. You were wise in not marring an excellent reputation.”

If Aunt Millicent with all her study and experience as a writer of books and delightful stories and criticisms, could not venture upon poetry, how could an untrained girl just out of school attempt it? Millicent Carew’s ambitious dreams seemed to fall from their resplendent height and evaporate in the sand at her feet. When she gained courage she glanced at them and consigned them to the flames with a feeling of bitter self-scorn. She was not a poet. Yet the disappointment was keen, for she loved all beautiful things and the phases of nature moved her deeply.

So it happened that a sweet dream and longing went out of her life. When mamma came back she and papa were like lovers, jealous of the golden moments. She had never been Reese’s chum, and as her mother said, she had no real girl friends, only acquaintances. There were so many dropped threads for Lyndell Carew to take up, letters to write to the absent children, that at first she did not note how Millicent had slipped out of the inner living, while the outer was satisfactory enough. Millicent had no resentful ways, and a certain sense of duty as a daughter; a sweet sense with all the affection there had been in the household.

But she lived too much within herself. She did not

understand that she was weary of her own rather narrow personality, and yet she kept clinging to it as one sometimes does to a great sorrow. She went to an extreme of self-depreciation that was more pride than humility. She was no genius ; she had no rare gift. Even if she were beautiful, and a little more of something might have helped ! That again was self. Lyndell Carew had always been so much interested in the lives of those about her, and the lives of those she could benefit, that she supposed any child of hers must inherit the same breadth.

She could see the difference so plainly between the two girls in this little vacation time. Honor was for sharing everything, Millicent thought she had nothing to share. Honor went to the Working Girls' Club one evening and told them what a girl's college was like, and of ambitious girls with some gift who had worked their way through, of fun and frolics, harmless ones, and friendships.

"O Miss Honor, you're so much like your mother," said one girl, pressing her hand. "It's just a treat to hear you."

"They're very interesting," Honor confessed to Millicent. "They say so many quaint, honest things. They are so eager to learn. If I had your time, Milly"—studying her sister with an intent glance.

"You would do a great many things in line with mamma. I haven't the gift. I couldn't talk as you did to-night."

There was no jealousy in the tone. Rather it began in despondency and ended in admiration.

"But you could give them an hour's music some night. And you could read—you are a fine reader."

"I haven't the sort of courage."

“O courage!” in a provoked tone. “It simply wants will, resolution!”

“I haven’t that kind of will or resolution.”

“Milly, you are a sort of sixteenth century girl. One can imagine you in a high tower among the maids of some countess working tapestry and attending tournaments and going to vespers. You have come in the world too late.”

“I think I have,” the elder murmured in her soul. She was not in harmony with the activities of the day.

“Mamma, what do you suppose Millicent will do with her life?” asked Honor. “I am glad I had the ambition to want a college training, even if I shouldn’t ever be a grave professor or president. Papa won’t agree to my studying medicine, and I may never reach any great eminence, but I do mean to be of some service in the world.”

“Millicent has hardly settled to anything yet. Do you not suppose I want one home girl if you are going to try the great world?”

“O mamma, I shall be yours, too; I shall have to come and help you with the girls. There will be so many in four or five years.”

Her mother kissed her fervently, and thought of the other girl whose caresses lacked spontaneity.

“When the holidays are over I must set myself to cultivating her,” and the mother’s heart went out to the first-born daughter.

Christmas was a day of so many joys. Randolph’s letter in the morning and a box with a gift to each one, their own exchange, the remembrance of relatives and friends, the dinner, the many things outside that needed some supervision, all full of fervor and brightness. They

missed Randolph, but the Professor and Princess, Ned and Bertram Beaumanoir swelled the circle.

Early the next week an invitation surprised them. Pearl Amory's engagement had been announced and the wedding set for the regular bridal time, after Easter. But one of the secretaries of the embassy at Paris having been compelled to resign on account of ill health, Mr. Allison had accepted the appointment, and they were to sail the middle of January. There would be a grand church wedding, a reception at Willard's, and the bride would leave the same evening for New York, sailing the next day.

"Pearl has had a lovely girl's life," commented Mrs. Drayton. "For a beauty I think she is the most unspoiled girl I ever saw. For a person whose life has been one round of pleasure and admiration, she has managed to give a great deal of delight as well. She and Violet have had most delectable times. How much her mother will miss her! And little Daisy, growing up rapidly bids fair to be an artistic genius. So her father will be gratified."

"And Mr. Allison is a very fine man. You could not imagine Pearl marrying a poor man, it would really be a life thrown away, and some of the rich young men of to-day are very frivolous and pleasure-seeking, quite as much so as the girls. It is quite refreshing to meet some one with a purpose to life, and means to carry out many of the higher ideas," returned Lyndell.

"I have thought a good deal of the gospel to the rich, preached now and then with such fervor. When men listen to the broader call of humanity and realize their stewardship, wealth is put to its rightful uses, not kept for merely selfish purposes. And these are the men to take a warm interest in their country's welfare, they

carry weight. Pearl will grace any sphere. I am glad she waited to find a true mate."

It had been a very satisfactory engagement to the Amorys, for Mr. Allison was a rising man of broad culture and uprightness, a fine citizen, having an ardent love for his native land, after having traveled through other countries in a most observant fashion. And though Pearl had been a belle of several seasons, she had grown richer by the experience, tempered as it had been by the judicious care of her mother.

Her father had said—"Pearl's mission in the world is to shine, and she does it so radiantly that the space about her is warmed and made beautiful for the enjoyment of others. She is diffusive with rare wisdom, or," smiling, "out of an overflowing heart. Many kinds are needed in this great world, and a beautiful and gracious woman is no less God's work than a beautiful flower, and may prove a beneficent right to the gift."

Violet had written a fond letter to Lyndell.

"We want all the aunts and cousins we can muster," she said. "It will seem like a break to have a marriage out of the old church, but the change would come some time. So many of our old Virginia friends and relatives are gone, and the new ones are more especially the friends of Leonard's children, who will grow up to take our places. I often think of the old life, Dell, until it seems like a romance that must have happened to other people, it has had so many strange ramifications. Did you ever think that presently we shall be the old people, and our children the active members? Sometimes I wish I could hold the others back and keep them children."

It was a half pang in Lyndell's heart as well, and she was glad she was not alone in the thought. She said to

Violet after the wedding that she believed the happiest time in a mother's life was when her children were growing up, before they had ceased to be all hers.

"I suppose I *could* go," began Honor, "and then I should want to stay and visit, and the journey home and back to college would be all the way up Heartbreak Hill."

"Pooh! Honor, your heart isn't going to break so easily," declared Reese. "I thought you were longing to get back, and would not mind the ascent of the hill difficulty."

"There is nothing difficult, but lonely enough when you think of the others having a good time and you not in it. I hate to miss any good time. You never can get it back. Now, knowledge is so different. What you don't acquire to-day you can achieve to-morrow if you study hard enough."

"That won't erase an imperfect mark, however."

"I was merely pointing out the difference between fun and study. Mamma, how long will one need to be gone?"

"If you should take a night train ——"

"That's rather hard," said her father. "She must come home and we will all go together. It will break you three days, Honor."

"And right in the beginning of the term, just as one gets settled! I suppose it will be a grand crush, and Pearl will look extraordinary lovely. But then there will be some handsome women left in the world. We may have one of our own," glancing at Florence, who was intent upon transforming an orange into a rose set in yellow, and who never heeded the implied prediction. The mother gave a little twist to the corner of her mouth, she was too much amused to frown.

"Do you suppose beauty is really harmful?" asked the girl with the utmost gravity, though her eyes twinkled.

"Not if you do not make harm of it," said the mother gently, for just then she caught grandpapa's glance, and the same thing flashed through both minds, the talk about beauty when she was a little girl, and Doctor Carew saying every one ought to learn to make herself beautiful within and without.

"I've often wondered," began Honor sagely, "that everybody wasn't made beautiful. Then you see I should have been among them. No one could be vain or haughty or proud, for all would have stood on the same level. Haven't I heard something about beauty being a Sherburne inheritance? And we have missed it by being Carews."

Honor sprang up suddenly, and the next instant her arms were about her father's neck.

"Dear papa," half crying and half laughing, "I'd rather be your daughter than have all the beauty and the wealth in the world! And grandpapa is a handsome old man. And you—why there is nothing so lovely in the whole wide world!"

She kissed him rapturously. It was some moments before he could get breath.

"Then you are not angry with mamma for marrying me? I think she might have had Uncle Len."

"Angry! I'm always blundering about something. I can't imagine mamma marrying any one else. And you are fine and splendid looking, so stout and strong and earnest and loving. After all, no one in Uncle Len's family is very handsome except Edward Sherburne, and perhaps Princess,—no, she is pretty."

"The three older Sherburne women were very handsome in their youth," said grandpapa. "And their

aunt Miss Aurelia was the toast of the county in her girlhood ; ” glancing at Lyndell, who believed that now, for in her old age she had made herself beautiful again by allowing love to glorify her in word, deed and thought.

“ Well, I don’t think Cousin Sherburne was so very splendid the winter he was here for all his good looks ! ” began Reese with a kind of indignant vigor. “ I like Bertram ten times as well, and Cousin Ned, who is near-sighted and—and—well, you can’t call him handsome, but he’s charming for all that, and knows such lots of interesting things. Mamma, is a thirst for knowledge one of the Sherburne inheritances, for if it is, I’m glad of my half of the Sherburnes, and my other half is all papa.”

Florence had finished her orange. She came and laid half of it on her mother’s plate. The other she took around to her father.

“ You can’t divide hearts,” she said, “ but did you ever hear of any one having two hearts ? I think I have, so there is a whole one for each of you.”

Her father smiled and kissed her fondly.

The last part of the dessert was always very informal. They told jokes and gave riddles to each other, or some one rehearsed a witty poem. Reese declared it was the best part of the dinner, and Cousin Ned often dropped in for the bit of home life, sunshine and merriment.

Millicent went to her room when they had dispersed. She was gratified that Pearl had asked her to be bridesmaid. Now she took a survey of herself. She was slender and shapely, and she wished, oh so ardently, that the Sherburne inheritance of beauty had come to her as well as Pearl. Certainly mamma was a distinguished looking woman and had beautiful eyes. If hers were only darker and had that velvety look ! If there was something more definite in her face, just a touch. If she

could interest herself in everything as Honor did, make her cheeks flush and her eyes sparkle, her whole face light up.

There was considerable discussion about the wedding. Millicent was to come for a visit and stay at least a week with Aunt Violet when the bride had gone. Cousin Ned insisted Aunt Milly should go out with him and choose a wedding present. His brother, Leonard, was to be one of the ushers.

"And of course he will add much more dignity and grace to the occasion," laughed Ned. "I've often half envied him his good looks and vivacity, for somehow I never know what to say when I get in a gay crowd."

"You keep out of the gay crowds so much. I do think you young men owe something to society. When I was a young woman the young men were anxious to please and entertain. They brought out their best. And it made life charming."

"I don't know what is considered best. I am not horsey or golfy. Most of the new dances are beyond me. I don't run much to athletics. In fact, I am only fit for a musty professor and bookworm. I like the talks at your house and at the Kenneths'. And Mr. and Mrs. Phillips are delightful. I haven't time for any more," with a little laugh. "And I do find life very enjoyable if it isn't wide."

Princess Kenneth was making a charming intellectual circle about her husband. Columbia men admired her very much. Their evenings generally ended with two or three songs that lingered long in the hearts of the hearers.

The New Year came in, and holidays were over. Honor went back to college, and in a few days decided that she would not waste her time on railroad trains, but

read the marriage service at high noon and imagine the rest. "Stir up Milly," she wrote, "and make her look as bright as possible. I've been thinking that Milly may turn out handsome after all. She lives too much from the interior as blondes are said to do. That isn't original, and I do not believe it is quite true, but it sounds intellectual. Kiss the bride for me and I will write her a letter of good wishes."

Lyndell smiled a little. Yes, Millicent did need bringing out of the self that wrapped her so about. Was this reticence a family inheritance back to Aunt Aurelia? No one she could recall had been so self-centred.

Pearl had insisted those nearest and dearest should bestow only the simplest of gifts, something that could go over the ocean with her.

"I dare say I shall be homesick many a time," she said to Ray. "Perhaps I shall weep a few salt tears for mamma when Mr. Allison is well out of sight. We have been almost like two girls, and I have had such a happy time. But you see she will be comforted by the others, and will soon have another daughter growing up."

Ray was always one of the most welcome visitors at her aunt's.

The house was very gay. Two of the bridesmaids beside Millicent had come for a few days, living at a distance. The two girls came up from Beaumanoir, and Edward Sherburne was to be best man.

Quite an imposing array it was, the bride in satin and a cloud of elegant lace. Daisy, the little flower maid, and the others in their picture hats, the two first in palest blossom pink, the next a shade deeper, and the last deeper still, like an unfolding rose. The church was crowded; it was really the affair of the season, and the

reception was quite magnificent. Then the beautiful bride disappeared, leaving a trail of newspaper glory behind.

At the Amorys' there was a family dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Beaumanoir, quite old people, the last of their generation. How many times they had been called together on joyful occasions, so few in sorrow. Dell spoke of this to her husband.

"Yes; Providence has had us in its keeping. Let us give thanks for the blessings."

"Ray's marriage ought to be next," said some one.

"But I haven't any lover," and Ray gave a bright laugh. "I am papa's sweetheart."

CHAPTER IV.

IN A STUDIO.

MILLICENT CAREW sat painting in her uncle's studio. He had been giving her a few lessons.

"What is worth doing at all is worth doing as well as you can," he said. "Force and earnestness may go even in the painting of a flower."

"But I haven't any real genius," said the girl.

Paul Amory laughed, but it was a soft, half-encouraging sound, and not meant to wound.

"Then why do you paint?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I like embroidering better. But mamma insisted that I should learn different things."

"You have an ardent love for beauty of all kinds. You want strength. You want rousing."

"Millicent is a rather curious compound," the artist had said to his wife.

"You are almost as bad as Dell," retorted Violet laughingly. "If a girl can paint a flower you want her to live according to the true artistic purposes of life, whether she understands them or not."

"Not everybody can paint a flower. Many of them are daubs or shadows. And girls are mostly commonplace at her age, I know."

"Common things, ordinary things, ought to interest youth. It is natural. It would be rather hard to plunge at once into the stern realities of life. Pearl has been a delight to us without any genius of any kind,"

said the mother. She had missed her brightness sorely these few days; but it was rather the sad consciousness that she could never belong in the same way to her again.

"Pearl had a genius for living," said the father. "I never saw any one who lived more delightfully in every fibre of her being. But it is true that many people have no real hold on life. They drift along, and have no port in view."

"O, the years rouse them soon enough."

When Millicent could do so well, Paul Amory believed she ought to and might do better.

The waiter announced Mrs. Henderson.

"Are you ready for me? I came a little earlier on account of a change in my engagements. No, do not disturb yourself——"

Millicent had risen, and her uncle thought she would make a striking picture of a nymph poised for flight, but she was uncertain whether to go or stay.

"My niece, Miss Carew, Mrs. Henderson," he explained.

"She was one of the bridesmaids. Yes, I remember her," nodding with charming grace.

"You will not disturb us, Millicent."

The girl took her seat at the easel again. She was trying to get the water in her vase to look clear and not suggest paint.

Mr. Amory arranged the surroundings for his sitter, and gave directions that for the next half hour no one was to be admitted. Then he drew forth another easel and took the covering off of it.

Women who could afford it came to Paul Amory for a portrait. He put something in it that satisfied them, though he was particular about his subjects. This one

was worthy of any artist, a fine, handsome woman with superb health and coloring, who had just reached the most perfect stage of middle life and kept unbroken contours. An intelligent face, too, and the air of society, that fascinating aplomb which demands attention by its perfection.

She sat easily with no troublesome nerves to make her fidget. Amory enjoyed such subjects. She looked across at the girl, and remarked the lines of the neck, the softly rounded chin, the small pink ear, the hair with two or three ripples gathered in a coil at the back of her head. Her shoulders were shapely, her hand and wrist pretty.

Once Millicent glanced up, feeling the eyes upon her. Then she flushed and the just perceptible pink tinted her hands as well as her face. The little smile that crossed Mrs. Henderson's curved lips was an enchanting thing to a painter's eye.

"Think the same thought over," he said softly. "It gives an expression."

The thought was the utter innocence of youth. She had never been as innocent as that. But then she reflected her life had been much harder and narrower. The girls of to-day had so many advantages, even simple country girls.

Mrs. Henderson had passed the half century meridian, but no one would have guessed her over forty. She preserved a discreet silence on the subject, and was very thankful now that she was twenty-eight when her son was born. When John Charlton Henderson the great railroad magnate of his time had married a handsome young country girl, at the age of sixty-eight, it created quite a ripple among his friends, for he had been a widower for years. They lived in a quiet, substantial manner, partly

from necessity, perhaps, for soon after his marriage he met with an accident which resulted in a slow, creeping paralysis that, however, left his mind clear until a few months before his death.

Helen Kent had not had an easy life in her young years. Her mother had come home to the little old farm a widow with one child and died. Helen had been a sort of slave to her old grandparents. Once she had thought to escape by marriage, but the old people had effectually nipped the project, and when she saw the wife of her old lover, burthened with farm-work, housework and babies, she had no desire to change with her. It was easier after Grandmother Kent had gone, but there was still three years of servitude attending to a queer unreasonable old man.

A railroad has been surveyed through the town. It took the old Kent house and a strip of the farm. The three sons were settled and at a distance with farms of their own. One neighbor was very glad to take the strip of ground on the one side. The old man was very feeble now and might drop off any day. It would be at least three months before the place would be needed.

Mr. John Henderson had remarked the girl during the preliminaries of the bargain. Tall, strong, handsomer than the average, with a fine, clear skin, abundant hair and the figure of a youthful Juno, a voice that had a cadence to it like the floating notes of a bell, and slim, strong hands. He liked the sense of vigor about her.

He had been wondering what he should do with his money. He could found a college or a hospital or a home of some kind. He might build an art gallery even, for he had gathered many fine pictures, yet none of these appealed strongly to him. He delighted in making

money, he did hate to think of leaving it. If he were a younger man he might found a family. Why had he not thought of it before. There were plenty of women who would marry him for his money—was he foolish enough to demand anything else?

The road kept creeping along. It reached the confines of the town the very day old Jason Kent died. Henderson came over to see about the prospect, and found the house could follow its master.

“I suppose your grandfather made a will?” he said to Helen. “You deserve all for your care of these old people.” He had a strong sense of justice.

“No,” she answered in a tone that showed her hurt.

“Are there other heirs? How many?”

“Four beside my father. He died young. Two of my uncles are here. Will you see them? They think grandfather let the place go too cheap.”

Henderson gave an odd little twist to his lip and made a small calculation. Fifteen hundred or so dollars to be divided among four people!

“Have you thought of anything you can do?” His voice softened a little, out of pity for her.

“I am going away. I have studied by odd spells. I shall find some inexpensive place where I can add to my stock of learning, and then teach. I want to be something better than a drudge.”

“You have no lover.” There was a sharp flash in his eyes.

“No. And my small portion will not tempt any one to marry me out of hand.”

There was a little scorn in her voice. Curiously enough she was not bitter, he remarked.

He talked to the uncles while the surveyors were busy. Why not turn the whole sum over to her?

“Why all these years she has had her living,” returned one of them. “There’s more than one household where they would pay her good wages. A healthy stout young woman can always find something to do. I’ve a little mortgage I want to pay up with my share. Any of us will give her a home until she can turn herself.”

Helen Kent was used to close reckoning, and having people consider themselves first. She thought her grandfather might have done better for her, but she was intensely thankful to be free. Every hour her heart rose within her and the relief betrayed itself in her face, which certainly grew more spirited. There was a vendue to sell off the furniture, the cow and the poultry, likewise the old timber of the house. Then Mr. Henderson laid his plan before her. Could she marry him? He would give her whatever she wanted in reason. Teachers in any branch she should desire, a comfortable home and servants to wait on her, and the certainty that when he was gone she would be amply provided for. He was an old man to her, and he would not pretend to be an enthusiastic young lover.

A foolish old man he said to himself. Of course this girl, any girl would jump at it.

But Helen Kent did not, and he esteemed her the more for it. She raised frank, honest eyes.

“Will you give me a little while to think it over?” she asked, and there was hesitation in her voice.

“Yes. Let me see—I shall be back in a week. I am sixty-eight.”

“Why you do not look as old as Uncle Joseph!” in surprise. “And a little over a year ago a young woman of twenty-four, just half his age, married him and his five children.”

Joseph Kent was stoop-shouldered, grizzled and

wrinkled in deep furrows. Helen looked at Mr. Henderson admiringly, and it gratified him.

“And if at the last you should take as good care of me as you did of your grandfather, I can promise you a much better reward.”

“O, you almost persuade me ! But no, let me have the week ; ” drawing back imperceptibly to herself.

There was no one to whom she wanted to go for advice ; but she did consult the teacher of the district school on the time it would take to achieve that standing.

“You’ll find the ranks are terribly overcrowded. You would need two years’ study at the least. There are a great many other things a woman can do,” and much more discouraging advice from a teacher who had not been a great success.

So she married Mr. Henderson, and for the first six months she lived in a state of continual surprise. She went clad in fine raiment, she did not know herself in the tall cheval mirror. She had a companion and mentor who trained her in the niceties of society, and she had a curious ambition to excel. She was very grateful, and her kindly nature which she did not inherit from the Kents, was neither soured nor warped. They came to the substantial city house that he had kept up for years, and she did the honors in a quiet, well-bred manner as if she had been born to the purple. And when her little son came Mr. Henderson felt that he was established among men. He had founded a family to carry on his moneyed greatness.

Six months afterwards one day he was brought home with a broken limb caused by a fall. Then a slow, creeping paralysis set in. It was three years before it reached his brain, and all this time he gave thanks for a devoted wife. His boy thrived and grew.

“I want you to feel that I have done wisely for you,” he said one day, with a great effort to rouse his brain that was fast becoming torpid. “I think I have been more grateful than your grandfather. Your beauty has been a great delight to me. You have been a good wife, Helen.”

Some months later the flickering spark went out. The will had been carefully drawn. The income was all hers to provide for and educate the child until he was twelve, then a certain provision was made for him. At eighteen this was increased until he was twenty-five, when two-thirds of the income was to go to him and one third to her, or, on his marriage if he should marry earlier, with her consent. The estate was to be kept intact for the grandchildren, the eldest son taking his name and one-half of the property, the other being divided equally among the remaining grandchildren. In default of heirs the whole sum was to provide for and endow an industrial school and home for boys, to be known as “The Henderson Home.”

The income was generous; through those earlier years she saved a good portion of it. She had learned many things in her husband's home, and come to have quite a true estimate of the world. She went abroad and lived quietly, caring for herself, accomplishing herself, for she meant to reign in society. She learned, too, that the Kents were an old English family, and that in early sixteen hundred there was a baronet, Sir John Kent, and that her grandfather who had emigrated to America was a lineal descendant. Yet she thought they had grown narrow and mean in the third generation. Long pedigrees were not always a voucher for integrity and manliness.

She took good care of her son, and saw that he was

educated in all gentlemanly ways. He was a pretty child, an attractive looking boy, a really handsome young fellow as he grew to manhood. She would have liked a nearer resemblance to his own father in character, for he must have been resolute and daring in boyhood. She admired strong characters.

Meanwhile the estate had prospered in the hands of the trustees. Changes for the better had been made; it was worth more for the possible grandchildren. She had come to have quite a fortune in her own right. She had not pushed into society, she had been graciously sought out. American circles had made her very welcome. Sir Eldred Kent had been glad to meet her. She had kissed the hand of more than one queen, she understood that the golden key gained admittance everywhere when it had back of it tact and breeding and beauty.

She had been spending years abroad with her son in Swiss and German universities. All the time she had a longing for her native land and had returned the preceding spring, making a tour of the summer watering-places, and considering a permanent residence. Charlton must marry, and she did not mean to be separated from him, although the young couple would be left to their own ways of happiness. She had a habit of looking at girls with this in view, and did not wish a mere society belle, nor a commonplace girl, he would soon tire of.

She studied Millicent Carew from half idleness of mood, though when it came to that no mood of hers was really idle, for she enjoyed scrutinizing people, and in a certain fashion dissecting them, understanding their good qualities and their faults; she could penetrate the little shams and disguises, and had found long ago that the world was not made up of noble people, that there were meannesses and dishonesties among those who made high

pretensions to virtue. Her eyes had sharpened too much, her thoughts went too straight to the weak spots.

Millicent rather enjoyed her painting. Uncle Paul had said some very consoling things to her while candidly admitting that she was no genius. She was trying her best to correct a few faults. She turned her little painting to a different light and viewed it with interest, she shifted her position somewhat. She was so interested that she forgot about the handsome woman sitting in her range. She did not know then that the eyes had a curious second sight, that the outside of them had been trained by worldly wisdom in the high art of rarely giving offense and often giving pleasure. Their curious blue black tint had softened a good deal since the day John Henderson had found her. The inner sight was the impressions she laid on the little cells of her brain ready for after use.

A half developed girl who doesn't know how to make the best of herself, her thought ran. At twenty-five she may be handsome with the proper training, now she has the unformed look of sixteen. She has little real self-reliance and a good deal of obstinacy that is kept down and put out of sight when she meets a stronger will, but remains underneath all the time and will find a way out. I wonder what her mother is like? Her father must be Doctor Carew—why they were in Germany a year or two ago, and he has written several books—and then Mrs. Henderson went into a secret current like some far underground spring that makes all about it cold. She just caught herself on the edge of a shiver.

She has a pretty hand and arm, her ruminations flowed backward a little as she watched the graceful fingers. Her skin is fine and clear, her hair beautiful. Her dark eyes and eyebrows give character to a face that

otherwise would lack expression. She is gentle, amiable, inclined to keep to herself and defers easily.

"Are you tired?" asked Paul Amory. "This has been a splendid sitting. I have done some fine work, thanks to you. I wish I always had as good a subject."

"Thank you," smilingly, and with a shade of emphasis on the pronoun. "I suppose that means I may be dismissed?"

"Yes, but you need not hurry away." What a very handsome woman she was! And she had been a widow for years, he had heard.

She put on her stylish toque with its bit of lavender velvet in the back, some elegant point lace and an aigrette that nodded daintily. Then she picked up her costly sable cape.

"Are you doing anything new for your own amusement? Though I suppose the wedding has played havoc with work and ideas. You ought to paint your daughter in her wedding gown. May I look over this young girl's work? I never had any talent this way, or at least not in my youthful days."

Millicent flushed. "I do a little because every one else does," she rejoined with a touch of embarrassment. "And Uncle Amory is very good to correct some mannerisms," glancing up at him with a kind of sweet gratefulness.

"Do you choose to do just what others are doing?"

The girl was caught by the charming smile.

"Why no; not always. But at school ——"

"Girls must run through a certain round of accomplishments," explained Paul Amory. "Painting may be as good for a discipline as trigonometry."

"It has more grace and picturesqueness. You live in New York?" half question, half assertion.

"Yes," answered Millicent.

"I think of going there presently."

"What, tired of Washington?" Paul Amory's tone had an assumption of surprise plainly evident.

"No. Washington is delightful. But I am considering where I shall settle—with my son. He ought to be a sturdy American, but we have lived so much abroad. I must begin to train him now into good citizenship. I have not found the place abroad in five years that I have wanted for a home."

"I am really glad to hear you say so."

"And if I go to New York I shall hope to meet your people. I have heard a good deal about your father. I think I just saw him at the baths at ——"

Millicent flushed again. She felt curiously drawn to Mrs. Henderson as a bird is charmed. Ought she to express any wish? She raised her eyes and the wish was in them, which the elder woman answered with an enchanting smile.

"I hope you will succeed to your heart's content," glancing down at the picture. "Ought I to wish you will be an artist? I am afraid I am old fashioned, and have some respect for St. Paul. 'I will that the younger women marry—and guide the house.'"

"O, I shall never be an artist," cheerfully.

Then she was not a girl longing for a career!

When Mrs. Henderson said her adieus and went out of the studio, she still left a curious influence behind. Paul Amory worked with a subtle inspiration. What a delight it was to paint a truly handsome woman, who needed no adventitious aids! Millicent sat and wondered in a vague manner, and did not do anything. She was quite given to idle reverie since grandmamma had gone. Presently she rose and left the studio noiselessly

and went to the pretty sitting-room where Aunt Violet was busy with some dainty sewing.

“Do you know Mrs. Henderson, Aunt Violet?”

“Not much. Has she been in for a sitting?”

“Yes. She is very handsome.”

“A striking looking woman. I believe she is considered extremely fascinating. Your uncle loves to paint people that he does not have to add to;” with a rather amused smile. “And I suppose he is such a favorite because he does add to in a very graceful way when there is a necessity.”

“I think I don’t mind very much about not being handsome,” said Millicent, reflectively, “though I did wish it. But I like handsome people for all that,” glancing up with cordial admiration in her soft eyes. “And they please so readily.”

She was thinking now of Pearl, who always made troops of friends.

“And not a few please with very little beauty. I think more depends upon the sweet, generous nature. Some people put one at ease instantly. It is often thinking of others and forgetting about ourselves.” Aunt Violet smiled then at her own platitude. Millicent did not appear to think of herself in any importunate way, but she had not acquired by experience the art of thinking of others, and others had always thought too much for her. Lyndell had desired a happy childhood for her little flock, though she had not been weakly indulgent.

Mrs. Henderson did not see Millicent at her next sitting. She had gone to spend a few days with Ray Stanwood. She evinced a good deal of interest in Doctor Carew, and talked over some of the curious diseases that he had made such a specialty.

“You surely are not cultivating nerves yourself?” he

inquired. "You must not fall into a bad American habit so soon."

"O, no. I am robust English stock grafted in the first instance on country habits and energies. I like your Dr. Carew because he thinks people can help themselves so much by their own wills and endeavors. But how to make a weak will strong?"

"Training can do a great deal. If one were always wise enough to direct the grander forces of human nature and not take up the small ones. I should not think you would have to complain of a weak will;" in a buoyant, admiring tone.

"You think I have the appearance of a strong, self-reliant person?"

There was a quivering light that seemed like a sense of amusement in the eyes. Amory was for a moment embarrassed.

"Self-reliant certainly. O, I don't believe in the refinement that saps strength even in a woman. I like delicacy and all the graces, but not a clinging vine that throttles one;" rather impatiently.

"You are right in your surmise. I never remember being weak, though all my earlier life I was compelled to defer to the will of others. But you do meet people who seem too weak for the destiny devolving upon them."

"Alas! too many. It is what spreads ruin through the world. Even a good weak person can do a deal of harm."

"I suppose your Dr. Carew was one of a large family. Only children are doubly unfortunate."

"No, he was an only child. His mother died in babyhood. His father and an aunt reared him. I believe everybody predicted that he would be spoiled. I did not know them then. He is a truly splendid, large-brained,

large-hearted man. His father was a country doctor, a fine man; he is a city physician and scientist, but that is hardly half of him. The other half is breadth and tenderness and good sense and manly virtue. He married Mrs. Amory's cousin."

"And what is she like?" The soft inquiry had a persuasive accent.

"She is worthy of him. I will not say they are the happiest couple I know, for, thank heaven, I know many happy couples, but they are among the happiest and most useful."

Were there many such people in the world, or was it the outcome of high artistic sense and affection? Mrs. Henderson's views had never been wide, her youth had not tended that way. And Mr. Henderson's integrity had not given him faith in his fellow-men. Her grandfather had never expressed any special gratitude for her care—did he not give her food, shelter and clothing? She might have been turned over to the almshouse. Mr. Henderson had not married her for love; her baby was not any blessed gift, but the heir to all his money. He did not depend solely on mother love, this other element must spur her to her duty. This was what the world and fortune demanded.

After she was left a widow one of her uncles wrote a pleading, begging letter. He had bought an addition to his farm, then had a long illness when everything had gone at loose ends. The amount of a mortgage was coming due—could she not spare him a thousand dollars out of all her money? He did not ask it as a loan—it was presumably a gift. She read the note with a scornful smile and put it in the fire. After these years of silence he could ask for money!

John Henderson knew his wife was young and might

marry again. If she did, her son, *his* son, went into the hands of trustees who were his guardians. She had an income, half of what she had as a widow. After awhile she came very near loving a man of her own years who had many charms, whom she thought she could honor and esteem as well as love. But when he heard of these provisions his ardor cooled a trifle.

“It is very hard to ask you to resign your child !” he cried with what looked like indignation ; “unjust, for there is no love like a mother’s.”

The fancy died a lingering, natural death and Helen Henderson despised him, of course. Others came to hand and she measured them by this man and found in most instances they fitted the measure. And she had grown so used to luxurious living that she was not eager to take up comparative poverty. She was a charming woman who looked upon everything just as it affected herself. She had very little faith in human nature, she had sharpened both eyes and brain until in one quick glance could understand most motives, selfish ones, and the others she never looked for.

Driving round the picturesque circles and going back to her hotel her thoughts reverted to Doctor Carew. If one stood in need of a friend one could trust him to the uttermost, could repose any confidence in him. She might stand in need some day. He would not think she was a rich woman to be fleeced, he would do his work to the very utmost of his ability.

There were letters and invitations awaiting her. One missive she held in her hand some moments, it was one of the things on which a life might turn. Why could she not endow this vascillating soul with *her* strength, why did he not have the rugged resolve of his father? What was his father in his early youth, for he was eight

and sixty when she knew him ; but he must have possessed energy and will.

It was a sweet, rather girlish epistle full of protestations and prettily turned sentences that were like caresses. He would be with her almost as soon as the letter.

“The prodigal’s return,” she thought with a little scorn that came so natural to her. “I suppose he has spent all his money, and he is not one to take resolutely to husks.”

Late that afternoon Charlton Henderson arrived. The greeting between them was the tenderest. He had a subtle charm, many charms indeed, and at first he filled and thrilled his mother’s heart. His pleading, entreating eyes and mouth should have belonged to a girl, but they were little like his mother’s. His fine silky hair had a blue black tint and waved enough to give him the look of a poet, the features were regular, the expression a smiling complacency with the present, and literally taking no thought of the future. Why should he indeed ? There would always be enough. The figure had the softened outlines one sees in the sculptured Antinous, the grace of youth and happiness and satisfaction. She *must* love him no matter how far he was from her ideal son, for he was all she had, and could one question the tenderness that lighted up his face, that kept coming and going in his eyes, that bespoke the little changes of mood always those of pleasure.

She knew there were women at the dinner-table that evening wondering, and half envying her. She was always generous with her son now, and she introduced him to the young girls and their mothers with a charming frankness. She had been reading them just as she read Millicent Carew. He did not single out the prettiest, he laughed and chatted with all. At twenty his

mother guarded him jealously, now she speculated on the kind of girl he would fall honestly in love with. It was curious that he was not more susceptible. And surely by another year he ought to be married. The fortune ought to go to his children instead of being devoted to waifs and strays. Though now he looked as if health and long life might be his, the German doctor had spoken the truth about him then, and she need not fear.

CHAPTER V.

AN AWAKENED POTENTIALITY.

IT was quite delightful to be at home again, Millicent Carew thought. Had she been away a whole month! She felt curiously changed.

"I have missed you so much," declared her mother.

She had never stood first in the household before. Honor had such a strong personal vitality, and Randolph gave a curious sense of pervasiveness. It really was *her* place. She had never felt so grown up, so necessary.

Millicent was not effusive even now. She had enjoyed everything very much. The letters from Pearl were delightful. Uncle Paul had been interested in her and given her some new ideas which she meant to follow up. And she had such a nice time with Ray who was counting upon going abroad in the early summer with her father. Uncle Archie meant to resign his position and they would journey about at least a year.

"What a satisfactory pleasure it will be to Ray," said the mother. "And she deserves it all. She has been one of the most devoted daughters."

"What Milly needs is to have to depend upon herself in the great world," said her father. "She is a girl of slow development, and will cling to anything rather than stand alone."

Grandpapa thought her more truly affectionate and earnest. His early favoritism had been superseded by Randolph.

She found so many things to do, as if she had just be-

gun to live. She did not understand that part of it was the pleasure of having no rival. There are degrees of feeling never translated into words, perhaps if they were something more than a vague impression, and could be thrust boldly out to the light and made to take their real shape, one might be warned of their true and dangerous influence. Millicent would have scouted the idea of selfishness with the utmost indignation, yet she had longed for something all her own since grandmamma's death. On certain lines she was generous, but she did not give freely of herself to but very few persons. Honor had been liked and admired so much, she did not envy her, she thought, but she held aloof from the second best places, and seemed apathetical when she would have been glad of a preference, only it must be given, she could not raise a finger for it.

Dell was delighted with the sense of nearness, but she had many wonders as she began to study her daughter more closely. She still clung to her old employments, and shrank from contact with certain phases of real life. Reese said she was aristocratic in her tastes.

"I can't think who she is like," Lyndell said to her husband. "I can see myself in many traits in Randolph and Honor, even in Reese's quick temper," laughingly. "And she isn't so much like Aunt Neale ——"

"Must her qualities be traced to inheritance? Bring out your chemistry. Two compounds may make an unknown third," glancing up with a gleam of humor in his eyes. "I am glad you don't lay the least desirable qualities to my side of the house."

"O, she is not a bit like you," eagerly. "Think of her forging ahead in any fashion! I can't imagine what she would do if she were poor and had to struggle and make sacrifices."

“We are all glad to save our children from hardships, I find. And I am not sure they always perfect character. A strong mind and will can surmount them, but we hardly note all the wrecks that are unable to reach any haven. But it is hardly safe to predict from early youth.”

The city was still gay, and even when Lent came in there were many minor enjoyments; reading circles, where one took up a devotion to history; sewing clubs, where one made garments for the poor or articles for a sale; musicales, organ recitals and lectures. Millicent was drawn into some of them and lost a trifle of her shyness. Then she was asked to play for the benefit of some “Home” that was just then creating an interest. Mrs. Eric Kenneth was to sing. It was quite a society function, and given in a pretty hall that was held exclusively for better class purposes.

The audience was composed of people who bought high priced tickets with a certain sense of gratification. They were largely women, but there was a sprinkling of society men among them.

Mrs. Henderson was attending with well-bred interest, her son on one side of her and a fashionable acquaintance on the other. She rarely called them friends, it was so much easier to drop the former. Mrs. Burrel had been very obliging and sent her word of a most desirable furnished house that the owner wished to rent for six months while his family were abroad. Mrs. Henderson was tired of hotel life. Every now and then she settled herself in this make-believe fashion.

Mrs. Burrel had sent her tickets and a proposal to call for her in her carriage. Mrs. Henderson had only been domiciled ten days or so, but as the old servants were glad to remain, and were excellent, the domestic wheels revolved smoothly.

“What a beautiful voice, and what a pretty petite person,” she said in real admiration as a singer finished and was enthusiastically applauded.

“That—oh, that is Mrs. Kenneth. Her husband is one of the college professors, a man of note. If they were poor, she could make a fortune by her voice. But she sings only for charity or at some of the entertainments of the poor. That lady in the second seat with the white plumes in her black velvet toque is her aunt—Mrs. Drayton, quite a literary woman. They are Virginians. The Draytons are charming people, well connected, perhaps a little on the submerged side in their work,” with a vague smile and nod, “but one meets all the people of note at their house.”

How odd she should encounter Virginians again!

A slender young woman bowed to her audience and seated herself at the piano. She had played the accompaniment for Mrs. Kenneth, but Mrs. Henderson had not noted her.

“That is a cousin of the singer—Miss Carew. I dare say you have heard of Doctor Carew. They are all quite notable people. That is his daughter. One of this winter’s buds, though so far I believe she has done nothing to make her famous, nor taken the town by storm with her beauty. Mrs. Drayton is an extremely handsome woman. You would hardly believe she was a grandmother.”

Millicent Carew had almost gone out of her mind, it had been so occupied with other matters. She had hoped that in some way she might see Dr. Carew and decide how she liked him irrespective of Mr. Amory’s enthusiastic portraiture of him. She thought the girl looked prettier than in Washington, it was the music inspiring her.

It was not a brilliant noisy theme, the favorite of so many young performers; but Beethoven Appassionata with its delicate lingering harmonies, its soft, deep notes moving now with majesty, then suggestions of unearthly things, rising, falling, comforting, wandering away in dreamlike melody, then suddenly breaking into sunny gleams, crowded notes hurrying by as a river to the sea, strange breaks, a swinging movement over a flowery meadow. The music lovers listened with close attention, and the applause was generous.

"Is Mrs. Carew present?"

"No, I do not see her. She is one of the busy kind—doesn't play for sweet Charity's sake, but does the real work," smiling a little. "You meet her oftenest at the Draytons, but she isn't a real society woman. Our frivolities would bore her, but some one has to be frivolous or the world would grow stupid.

There was an entertaining recitation from Eugene Field's poems. Mrs. Kenneth sang again and Millicent played her accompaniment. Her beautiful hair was gathered in a shining coil at the back of her head, drooping to her neck; her trailing white silk gown made her look fairer.

"She ought to be the singer," said the young man. "She looks like music. And her hair is wonderful. I like light-haired girls."

The entertainment was over presently. There were tea and chocolate and bonbons in a pretty anteroom. Mrs. Burrel had the entrée and convoyed her guests thither. She was proud of the young man in her train. There were several introductions. Mrs. Drayton was pouring tea. Beside Mrs. Kenneth there had been a young lady singing whose friends had joined to send her abroad for a musical education. Miss Mainwaring had a very at-

tractive face. Mrs. Burrel caught her and introduced Charlton Henderson.

“My dear Miss Carew—am I not right?” said a voice with an inflection of pleasure that was flattering as a gentle touch was laid on the young girl’s arm. “This is a delightful surprise. I have been in the city hardly a fortnight. See what a memory I have—though I was not quite sure when I first saw you at the piano.”

Millicent flushed and smiled. There was so much gratification in Mrs. Henderson’s face.

“And that exquisite singer is your cousin. What a dainty little fairy. Is she —

Too bright and good

For human nature’s daily food ; —

and may I ask the favor of being presented ? ”

Millicent was girlishly proud of her handsome friend whose dress was the perfection of richness and good taste, and whose manner was at home in it.

“O yes, with pleasure ; ” and the young face beamed. “Princess —— ”

“Titles, too ? Why you seem to be a most remarkable family.”

“That is a pet family name because her own is so stately,” explained the girl, and Mrs. Kenneth was made acquainted with Mrs. Henderson who said some very charming things, and explained that she had met her relatives—the Amorys in Washington, and that Mr. Paul Amory had painted a most flattering portrait of her.

“I do not believe he flattered you,” Millicent commented naïvely, and then they both laughed.

“Now you must see Mrs. Drayton who is Aunt Amory’s sister,” said Mrs. Kenneth.

“And Judge Beaumanoir is her brother ! ”

“And my father,” returned Princess softly.

"You are famous people surely."

They had been talking several moments when Miss Mainwaring came up with Mr. Henderson. He desired to meet Mrs. Kenneth.

"Miss Carew and I are quite old friends," said his mother. "We met almost two months ago in Washington."

"Miss Carew, it is extremely fortunate it wasn't ten years ago. Old friendships presuppose years and years, and are occasionally unflattering recognitions."

"You saucy boy! Why I might have seen Miss Carew in her cradle if it had so happened, and we should neither have been a day older. I cannot deny my grown-up son, nor Miss Carew her girl's face."

The grown-up son looked very proud and happy among the bevy of girls.

"Are you staying in New York or merely a bird of passage?" asked Millicent timidly.

"Why we are absolute householders," replied Mrs. Henderson. "My friend Mrs. Burrel found me a house which is quite charming, only I shall have to entertain while my circle is small and will fit the rooms. We have lived abroad so long that it is quite a treat to find a country of one's very own, and a home for a while. I think seriously of settling down. Though my early married life was passed not far from here. The aspect of everything has changed so since then."

The guests began to disperse. Mrs. Drayton's carriage came and she took her young people. Mrs. Burrel set her friend down at her own door, and received cordial thanks.

"You never said anything about those people," the young man began. "I thought it would be something of a bore. One hears so much first-class music abroad.

What a beautiful voice that Mrs. Kenneth has, though it isn't adapted to everything. Miss Mainwaring is going to study opera. She has a great deal of dramatic force. Do you think Miss Carew pretty?"

"Well—somewhat. Not handsome."

"I like light hair and fair people. Her hair is magnificent. What a cloud it must be when she lets it down. Why doesn't her uncle paint her in some character?"

"He had a very handsome daughter that stood for several characters. She was married early in the new year and there was a throng of relatives. This Miss Carew was one of the maids in a picture hat. She did look quite bewitching. Then I decided to be painted—for posterity," with a rather constrained laugh.

The young fellow had been lounging on the silken pil-
lowed sofa. He partially raised himself and put another cushion under his head.

"Does that suggest, Madame Mere, that I might marry?"

"Well—why not?" very deliberately.

There was a long silence. Both remembered an episode they had promised each other to forget.

"In the summer you will be twenty-five. Why should you not marry? You will be amply able to support a wife."

He gave a little yawn that ended in a meaningless laugh, to conceal the fact that he was moved.

"You know the terms of your father's will. When we are both done with the property it goes to found a charity if there are no heirs. It was his wish to found a family, but he should have considered it earlier. Still, you may carry out his wishes. There is no necessity of your marrying money, but you do want a good family,

education and refinement. You can have a wide choice."

"And some good looks."

"Yes, I am in favor of the good looks."

"You are quite willing I should marry—then?" as if he was still a little incredulous.

"I should like it above all things if you make a sensible choice. And Charlton, *she* must like me. I shall not be separated from you. I should grow very fond of the right kind of a daughter. I get lonesome at times and life seems rather useless."

Did she think at five and thirty she should ever be tired of the world and what money could buy? She had her son to educate, she had ambitions for him even if he was to be a gentleman. How these dreams had come to nought and made her a woman faithless in many things that were esteemed high and honorable and to be sought after. Wealth that she had considered one of the chief blessings had proved its hollowness. People quarreled about ways of benevolence even, and condemned each other's methods bitterly. They wrote to her for all sorts of gifts and told her harrowing tales, and she often found the most honest appearing were frauds.

Charlton rose suddenly, if any such sinuous movement could be called sudden, came and leaned over his mother's chair and kissed her. They were not effusive people and seldom offered caresses. The Kents had not been warm natured, and though Mr. Henderson had been appreciative and kindly, he had made no point of loving though he had admired.

"You have been very good to me. You should have had a better son who longed to distinguish himself in some line. I dislike exertion. Study was always a bore, you know. I picked up languages in a conversational

way. We have traveled so much that I know about different lands, I can recall famous pictures and places, and am well informed. I like to see new faces, to hear pretty girls laugh and talk. But nothing goes down deep since that wretched time ——”

“Hush,” she cried authoritatively with a sound of anguish in her voice. “We were never to speak of it.”

“You plucked me out of the fire. But for you I might have perished in the flames. I despise the vague remembrance of that time. I could not love in that fashion again. It was an evil infatuation.”

“O hush, hush !” she implored.

“That is the last of it. I wonder if I shall be worth the saving? Some chord inside of me seems dead when it should be alive and vibrating. But you are my mother, I am your son, and we have no other relatives. I might marry and have it change the whole of my life. I suppose it is time. Mother, were you very much in love with my father?”

Her cheek burned scarlet for an instant. “He was a strong, earnest, vigorous man when he first met me. He gained my appreciation when he saw so plainly the selfish covetousness of my uncles and the utter indifference of grandfather for my years of care. I had no thought of his asking me to marry him, and really no idea of his wealth. Ten thousand dollars would have seemed an immense fortune to me then. I was grateful for my changed life, I gave him the truest esteem. He was full of business projects and but for the accident ——”

Could they have bridged over the years between and learned to love? She had been to him the mother of his son who was to carry on his name. She must keep her health, improve her mind, care for her beauty for the boy's sake. A hired nurse could wait upon him,

yet in those last years he *had* appreciated her ministrations.

"I do wonder you never married again! But of course you would have lost most of the fortune, and your graceless son. Well, I shall try honestly to fall in love with some nice girl. You shall select her."

"If she is nice in every respect I shall approve of her."

"That Miss Mainwaring was a charming girl."

"She sails next week. Charlton, you do not want a wife who has half a heart elsewhere, who will perhaps be longing for some career she has given up. I think the women with domestic tastes make the best wives. A young girl who is trained in society ways that will never put one to the blush."

"O, I couldn't endure awkwardness, nor real commonness. I like grace and sweetness and harmony. And that suggests the other girl's playing—Miss Carew. How delicious it was! I was really lulled to the land, 'where it is always afternoon.' I should like to hear her read poetry. I want some one pleasant to have around."

An exigent girl would never do for him.

"Yes—there are plenty of marriageable girls everywhere. In spite of careers, marriages seem to go on."

Charlton went back to his lounge. He pressed his cheek on the silken pillow, cool and soft and with a faint fragrance of violets. He was glad of luxury, it seemed to permeate and satisfy soul and body. The house was a real pleasure to him in its artistic adornments which were of the softer type, rather sensuous. He could absorb so much of this and filter it slowly through his brain. He had little of the impatience of youth.

Again Mrs. Henderson found the golden key opening doors for her. Invitations were sent in by the dozens.

A rich mother and a marriageable son were acquisitions to society that could not be slighted. There were a few late operas that they attended, some fine plays and various functions rendered agreeable by pretty and graceful girls. She gave a delightful dinner to some of the mothers and fathers. There were men passed middle life who could recall John Henderson, who by his vigorous plans and procedure had given railroading such an impetus. He was always spoken of in the highest terms and she did enjoy that.

Millicent Carew had gone home with Princess Kenneth. Up town in an almost rural neighborhood overlooking the Hudson and the picturesqueness that still lingered on the opposite shore stood some unpretentious houses with rather plain exteriors. One of these was made beautiful within by the young wife's exquisite taste. She kept with her her young brother Bertram, a tall wholesome looking lad, and the Baltimore cousin, Ned Beaumanoir. The men had the top floor to themselves and enjoyed it to the full, but they always wanted to come down in the parlor for an hour or two and have Princess play or sing or both, and talk over the happenings of the day, the new books, and the friendly letters.

Up-stairs in the nursery the best baby in the world slept in a healthy, comfortable fashion. The elder Mrs. Kenneth hardly knew which was the most dear, this boy of Eric's or the little girl of her daughter Margaret. She and Ruth Ensign came now and then for a week, a day's visit was never long enough since it was somewhat of a trouble to get Mrs. Kenneth moved. But she was the same cheery, radiant person, and kept up intelligently, but then who could drop down with a companion like Ruth Ensign!

Princess used to think if Ruth did not have this tie

there might be a lovely romance with Ned Beaumanoir.

Ruth's old grandmother was dead, and only one of the uncles living who was so out of his mind guardians had been appointed for him. Her share in her grandmother's estate due her father had been paid over to her, but it had not made her independent.

They were visiting now when Princess and Millicent came home. Yes, the musicale had been a great success. The attendance had proved excellent, the little chat over the chocolate afterwards was most enjoyable.

"And Princess sang so beautifully. I liked her better than Miss Mainwaring," declared Millicent, moved to unwonted enthusiasm.

"But I couldn't carry off an opera and I do not enjoy acting. I should be haunted by a ridiculous sort of feeling if I tramped around a stage singing my loves and trials and despairs."

"Yet you like opera so!" exclaimed Ruth in amaze.

"I do not have to pretend anything," and the dark eyes were alight with amusement. "I admire the perfect manner in which the singers generally do it, and yield to the charm of the music. Perhaps you have found out, Ruth, that there are many things in the world I could *not* do," with an arch smile.

"And one of the graces of life is to thoroughly enjoy what another does," said Mrs. Kenneth. "I always pity those people who think they could do so much better if they had the opportunity."

"And Milly's Sonata was exquisite. She always plays accompaniments with feeling and appreciation. You are a rest to one's voice. I am so glad you tried. But I dare say now that you have done it once you will be

besieged. I wish some of the poor struggling girls could be asked to take part in these high up entertainments. It would do them a world of good."

"But you couldn't sell tickets so readily," said Ruth gravely. "Two or three high up names go a great ways."

"I am glad of Miss Mainwaring's success and I hope she will realize her dreams. There are a good many excellent singers among the young girls, though I suspect that makes it more difficult to attain eminence. One has to do wonderful work in anything to stand at the head."

"Still there are a great many delightful intermediate places," suggested Mrs. Kenneth.

"And though there is a good deal of talk about there being plenty of room at the top, my experience is that the top of most places is small and hasn't standing room for a great number. And many of us cannot pay three or four or five dollars to hear a splendid singer, so the lower rounds often give a wider gratification," said Ruth with merry good-humor shining in her eyes.

Millicent was looking wistful. Yet she had played the Sonata beautifully, she knew. She had forgotten all about herself and thrown her whole soul into the music.

"Milly," began Princess with sudden interest, "you met that handsome woman, Mrs. Henderson, at Uncle Paul's it seems. She recalled grandmamma to me as she was years ago, only grandmamma's face is nobler, and she is lovelier since her hair was snowy white. She doesn't look fashionable like Mrs. Henderson, but there is a fascination in the latter's smile. I think she might quite bewitch me!"

"O Princess!" ejaculated Ruth.

"Had she no effect upon you, Milly?"

"I only saw her once and I was painting. I hardly thought she would remember me. O dear!" with a pathetic appeal in her eyes, "how can you remember all the names and all the people? I do not want to be fashionable."

"The son is not as fine looking as the mother," commented Princess. "They seem to have been everywhere and seen everything and are not puffed up with pride, nor trying to claim any superiority."

Princess always saw the virtues if there were any. If she saw faults she said nothing about them.

"Henderson!" began Mrs. Kenneth. "Why, Ruth, that is the name of the people who took the Compton house. A mother and son, and the son is a good-looking young fellow I should judge from a casual glance, since he has to pass our house. From my coign of vantage I observe my neighbors, but I only gossip in the bosom of my family;" and she gave a soft laugh.

"Yes, I think I heard Mrs. Henderson explain that it *was* the Compton house. I hope they are the kind of people who will enjoy the beautiful appointments," said Princess eagerly.

"They are not newly rich at all events," remarked Millicent. "I heard Uncle Paul say that."

"And Mrs. Henderson really has charming manners, though she looks as if she might be haughty as well. On the whole I liked her."

"Old-fashioned neighborly calling has gone out of date, so I doubt if I make her acquaintance. But I am curiously interested in her—the mother of an only child," and Mrs. Kenneth gave a tender little sigh.

"She didn't seem to be a bit exclusive with him, or perhaps it was pride?" glancing up at Millicent. "She appeared to want everybody to know him."

Millicent made no comment. He had not impressed her strongly.

Her mother was waiting expectantly when Millicent returned. Cousin Ned had escorted her, but he would not come in.

“You had a nice time?” began her mother. “I saw Aunt Milly, and she said you did yourself credit. I hoped to get in towards the last, but there were so many things to do. I am glad to have you take an interest in these entertainments. Next week I want you to play for one of my girls’ clubs. I suppose the baby is well and good? He is like the Murray babies as I remember them.”

“Mrs. Kenneth and Ruth have come to make a visit. And mamma, that handsome Mrs. Henderson was at the musicale—she is living on the block with Mrs. Kenneth. Princess thinks she has a suggestion of Grandmamma Beaumanoir. It was a great success, they all said and Princess sang—well, like an angel, I think.”

She did not want to talk about herself. Her mother fondly kissed her good-night.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH A BEVY OF GIRLS.

EASTER came with all its joy, the harbinger of Spring. There were weddings galore. Millicent was asked to stand at two, not because she was so dear a friend of the bride, but because she was effective and looked rather statuesque. Girls called on her and she returned the calls, but she did not seem to grow into any stronger individuality. She wrote sisterly letters to Randolph and Honor, and told all the little happenings, while Honor's letter bubbled over into pages and pages and there were so many bright joyous things, vividly translated that one could almost see them.

"I wish you were here sometimes, to get shaken out of your hedged about self and see what girls were like who had aims and motives and loves and dislikes. You go on so evenly. You don't seem to take real hold of anything unless it is embroidery, though mamma says you have improved wonderfully in your music. Milly, you'll go on in this quiet way and miss all the real fun out of life. You'll be an old maid, I know. Not that it is necessary to be married nowadays, but there are splendid single women, and old maids who wither up gradually because they haven't energy to do anything else."

Millicent would look with vague troubled eyes out to the distant future. Most of the Sherburne girls did marry sooner or later. There was Ray Stanwood, who had no lover and no genius and no especial gifts, but

she was a happy girl. Millicent did not know whether she was really happy or not, but she was sure she was not unhappy.

Then Ray came up to make a little farewell visit, and everybody received her with delight. They were to sail from New York. They must go up to West Point and say good-bye to the soldier boy. Dell and the doctor had been up and found him well and satisfied.

"Of course it isn't play," he said as he was taking Uncle Archie around, having had permission of a half day's release from duty, for some of the old instructors remembered Lieutenant Stanwood and his fine record. "I think I had idealized it a little, but next year it will be easier. And I promised father to keep out of mischief and scrapes—though several times it has been desperately hard"—with a half regretful smile. "I want to pass all the exams in good shape, and prove to the home folks that I have not made any mistake. I think mamma is more reconciled, especially as Reese has set his heart on studying medicine. It wouldn't do to have so many doctors in the family."

"You are on the right track, I am sure. Even if you should go into civil life afterwards, these four years of training will be an excellent discipline."

"But I don't mean to go into civil life;" a resolute purpose illumining his eyes. "I'll go out on the frontier, anywhere. The country keeps growing larger and more men are needed. So many of the plebes will fall out, too. I should feel ashamed to be dismissed."

He showed it in every line of his face. He was growing more like his father. Ah, what happy times the older generation had had! He recalled one visit at Sherburne House and his first acquaintance with Cousin Dell, a little girl who had been ill and come an unwelcome

guest to her own home. Was that fine and gracious woman, handsome with all the rich experiences of middle life, the alien thrust among them—God's gift unaware? And was he talking to her son here, this proud, ambitious young fellow, who was winning back the approbation it had been hard to do without.

There had been not a few changes since Archer Stanwood's day. They marched about the cadet barracks, inspected the mess hall. There was the beautiful little cadet cemetery overlooking the Hudson, a reminder that death claimed his spoils as well in times of peace as on fields of battle. Even here Spring had set her signet on clustering shrubbery and majestic trees, elms that had seen generations come and go. The parapet of Fort Clinton was clothed in misty softness, and the hills over opposite had the blue tint of the sky. How serene it all appeared.

Strolling around in the fragrant air with everything leaping into new life, the young fellow, as full of enthusiasm as the elder had been years ago, Randolph Carew heard the sad story of why his uncle had left a profession he had loved with true soldier ardor and turned his attention to money making for one who had not appreciated the sacrifice, and which had proved useless in that respect, but given the declining years of his parents much comfort, and which had been his reward. And now he was going to take the long holiday he had truly earned.

"I shall just count on your letters, Uncle Archie," the proud young cadet exclaimed. "And in another year I shall have a vacation, but that will belong to mamma."

"What will belong to me?" asked Lyndell, who had caught the last word. She had questioned how much of her son belonged to her.

"Why, you know in little more than a year I shall be

allowed a furlough. I shall report at once to the home officer and be under her commands ; " bowing with a young soldier's respect.

She was deeply touched. Had she been quite right to show her hurt so plainly to her boy ?

Their eyes met and her half entreaty was answered by his fond smile.

" You have a fine boy, Dell," Archie said, as he was sitting beside her in the train on the homeward journey.

" I think I have not quite appreciated his fervent desire for a soldier's hardships. It seems to me almost any boy would shrink from the rigorous training," she replied with new appreciation.

" ' Endure hardness as a good soldier.' I think it gave me courage at the worst of times. There is an enthusiasm about it that few women can understand ; " and a half regretful expression deepened in his eyes.

" Still, I am glad I have not another son to give up. And Reese is growing so into father's heart. We do not understand how life narrows as one comes to old age. One of the most beautiful things I remember is Tessy Beaumanoir's devotion to Aunt Aurelia and Cousin Garrick. That alone was worth Sherburne House."

" And you have never repented ? Dell, you have done many lovely things in your life."

" For all it began so badly ? " She smiled, but her eyes had the softness of tears. " I ought not say a word about Randolph taking his own way when I had so much will and persistence. And then farther back my own papa took his own way. Aren't we Sherburnes a rather self-willed lot ? "

" The capability of holding on is a virtue worth striving for. You cannot have strong characters with a good deal of yielding grace. In my early life I did not have

so much of the Sherburne resolution as would have been good for me. I have been giving Randolph a little warning."

"Thank you." O, would there be a time when she must share her son's inmost heart with another? There was a quick, sharp pang as comes at first to all mothers. Lyndell wondered why they were more ready to give up their daughters than their sons.

Dr. Carew had found an old professor and was deep in subjects of mutual interest, knowing that Cousin Archie had much to say to Dell.

"I wish there was another girl to take abroad," he remarked to Lyndell. "If Floyd's daughter was a little older I should beg for her. But Ray and I have been so companionable the last year, only I am afraid I shall make her too old with the gravities of my life. And the poor child has had many depressing subjects to consider in her short existence."

"She is very cheerful, I think, in spite of it all. She was such a bright, winsome little thing, and oh, what a delight and comfort to your mother."

"I was always glad that I could give mother something beside sorrow. O, Lyndell, how necessary it seems to have a little wisdom in youth, the time we have least. But it would hardly be youth if it was freighted with care and experience. The other two boys have been very happy in their married lives. That was a great satisfaction to mother."

Even now Lyndell could hardly feel resigned to the havoc a selfish woman had made with a life that might have had so much enjoyment in it, that was formed for domestic love and happiness.

When they reached home they caught the sound of merry young voices in the far end of the drawing-room,

and the fragrance of tea gave a refreshment to fatigue. She laid aside her wraps and went in. There was quite a bevy of young people all of whom she knew except one young fellow with what struck her as a superabundance of good looks, yet at first sight it rather repelled her, she could not tell why.

“I wonder if I may have a cup of tea?”

“O mamma, with pleasure. Ray and I have had quite an unexpected reception afternoon. And to think Miss Golden is to sail on the same steamer as Ray, and she is so glad to really know some one.”

“My aunts are to meet me on the other side, but mamma has been quite worried about my crossing alone, though she knows the stewardess very well. I am just delighted. I dare say I shall end by envying Miss Stanwood her father, Miss Milly has been praising him so warmly.”

Millicent smiled and flushed as she poured her mother's tea. A bunch of splendid roses lay on the table, and two that matched them were fastened in her corsage.

“We were just taking our leave,” exclaimed an eager looking girl who had brought in her brother. “Indeed they had been going the rounds,” she explained laughingly. “It was such a tempting afternoon.”

The girls wished Ray a fine voyage and a happy year. There were only two or three left. Lyndell leaned over to put down her cup and whispered, “Whose friend is the dark young man?”

“O mamma—I thought you knew.” Then glancing up she made a little gesture that drew him thither and presented him. “Mr. Henderson.”

Ah, that was what puzzled her, the likeness to his mother. Yet his mother had the nobler face.

“I am very glad to meet you, for we have already be-

come acquainted with some friends of yours. In fact we consider ourselves very fortunate, coming to a strange city, though it was the home of my early childhood, and meeting at once so many charming people. Is it true that one finds what one most looks for? You have seen my mother, I think."

The voice was strangely melodious, yet it had in it a certain vague quality that did not quite satisfy, was not indeed the ring of youth and hope. Perhaps she had Randolph's manly, joyous cadences still floating through her brain. She liked clear voices full of purpose and had no patience with the languid society drawl.

"Yes, I have met Mrs. Henderson;" nodding graciously.

"Two or three doors from us lives a Mr. and Mrs. Phillips—and some other members of the family. My mother was quite charmed with them."

"We are connected with Mrs. Kenneth, the invalid, by a marriage. We have known her a long while."

"And Mr. and Mrs. Drayton; beside some relatives of yours in Washington—an artist."

"Yes, my cousin, Mr. Amory."

It seemed as if he was bringing out all his credentials to establish his position among them.

"I wonder if it is too late to say how much I enjoyed Miss Carew's playing the other morning at the musicale. She has a wonderful touch and talent."

"She plays some things, music she likes, exceptionally well. But to be remarkable in anything requires work and perseverance, and she does not like the labor," with a smile that made his speech less a compliment.

"To my thinking she does not need much labor. Isn't it better to do a few things well, Mrs. Carew, than

to attempt a good many things and fall far short of success?"

Another guest came to say good-bye. Henderson turned to Miss Stanwood and began to tell her about some pictures she must surely see at a Berlin gallery. Mrs. Carew gave a smiling nod and gracefully bowed herself out, leaving the young man to the two girls. He seemed in no hurry to get away, she thought.

The girls came chattering and laughing up the broad staircase. Millicent had her roses and she put them in a tall cut-glass vase, that after the border at the top was clear until it reached the middle when there were facets again that caught the light like diamonds. How clear and beautiful the green stems with a suggestion of delicate red looked!

"What magnificent roses!" cried Ray. "And what a—yes he *is* handsome, but curiously so, do you not think? It is one's idea of a poet, only my poets are golden haired and fair. I'm sure I don't know why," smiling at herself. "Are you sure he doesn't write poetry?"

"He doesn't play any scarcely, and he is so fond of music. I don't know about the poetry. Yes, they are splendid, and oh, so sweet."

She just touched her face softly to them. The leaves were like satin, no, like something human, caressing, tender.

"O, why did not you leave them down-stairs?"

"They are mine," said Millicent with a secret exultant joy. Some one who had no relative demand on him had brought them purposely for her, and taking out two of the choicest buds had begged her to wear them that he might know she was not offended with the liberty.

"Yes, but since we are going out this evening ——"

Millicent made no reply. They would be here and they were hers, keeping watch for her return, welcoming her, something she need not share with any one, for there were flowers enough down-stairs.

They were to go to Mrs. Drayton's for the evening. Dinner was scarcely over before two ladies came in to see Mrs. Carew about some poor unfortunate.

"Mamma is almost equal to papa," said Milly brightly to Ray. "Her sitting-room is her office, and patients flock hither. Sometimes it is very inconvenient. Why do people have so many wants?"

"Because so few of their needs are satisfied, I suppose. But those ladies looked comfortable enough."

"O I dare say they had a 'case.' Some poor girl or woman whose husband has deserted her, or child to get into a home. Ray, what a nice world it would be if everybody was comfortably well off."

"What an idea! But I do not suppose it could ever be. There are people who begin with a good deal of money and in a few years have wasted it all. There would be no use and no need for philanthropy."

"But we could have a good many other things. And they, the once poor people, wouldn't need to bother their neighbors."

"O, your mother doesn't think it a bother. And Ruth Ensign—I half envy her. How queer it all is; life I mean," with a little reminiscent laugh; "and the schoolgirls that were together. I can't, somehow, make a compeer out of Mrs. Con Murray, but when she was Gertie Maurice she was on a par with the other girls, except—I don't say this in any derogatory manner," with a touch of deprecation in her tone—"she was poor and very brave about her poverty. She never pretended to anything she wasn't. And now she is a brilliant society

woman in the best sense. Violet Osborne is in Rome making a reputation on pictures, to Uncle Paul's great delight. Pearl is married splendidly; Princess is the sweetest wife and mother I know, and hasn't lost her interest in outside matters. Then there was a Kitty Saxon, who is married—Ruth and I are the—what shall I say—we are not old;” and the sentence ended with a gay accent.

“Do you think you will be married, Ray?”

Ray Stanwood flushed.

“I haven't thought about it—much,” rather incoherently. “I have not seen any one I liked above all others, and there was grandmamma—and papa, and the home, and I have had a real good young girl-time after some mistakes and a great sorrow. But I would like something definite. I don't want to lead a useless life. I think I should like to be up here among you all, full of work and interest, and leading a large life. Still if God gives us small things to do we ought to do them cheerfully.”

“Why can't we be let to do them as we like, then?” said Millicent, with wilful curves to her generally reposeful lips that shut so prettily. Honor said of her she did not need to talk, that she made more of an impression when she was silent. “Everybody talks of contentment, but when you want only a few things, and are quite satisfied with your own way, why can't you be let to enjoy it in peace?”

Millicent was seldom argumentative. She seemed to give up in many ways, yet in the under current of her will held on persistently, as many outwardly gentle people do.

“I'm not sure about contentment. It is something finer and grander than most of us make it. I have seen

some lazy, wretched people content in their dirt and misery, and some very self-complacent people who fell back upon this much maligned virtue. I think it has a higher and finer quality."

Ray had learned many things in her short life, and that loveliest of all grace, that of doing without. She was resigned to not having beauty or genius, or a fine voice, or brilliancy like Mrs. Con Murray. Yet Aunt Millicent had said to Lyndell: "How much prettier Ray has grown! She has come back to the sunshiny brightness of her childhood."

"She has been learning to go out of her own self. Introspection and comparison are bad diseases for young girls, though, like measles," laughing brightly, "most of us seem to have an attack of them in the susceptible years."

Millicent Carew was thinking in her slow way of Ray's last sentence.

"I want what I want," she began presently. "It is not very much either, and I am satisfied with it. How do other people know what suits you down in your heart?"

Talking of these things to Milly was like talking in a circle, one never reached the vital point. Ray liked Honor better, and yet Milly was very sweet. But it was true she did not take much interest in anything outside of herself.

"There is Aunt Milly's carriage, I do believe. O, and you are all ready! I should like to have a maid. Mamma thinks it foolishness, and yet she had some one at Sherburne House. I'm going to put a rose in my hair. Ray, there are some pretty pink ones down-stairs"—she could not think of giving up her choice ones. "I won't need gloves since I am to play. Am I all right?"

She look extremely pretty in her pale, pink silk gown, with its chiffon ruffings. Ray's was blue nun's veiling, and very becoming. They just said adieu to mamma through a twirl in the portière, and glided down-stairs.

It was only a little promiscuous company. Mrs. Wendell was going to take her daughter abroad, and after a summer of travel leave her at a school to be perfected in a few foreign branches. She was anxious that somewhere they should meet the Stanwoods, and had been invited to make their acquaintance. Mrs. Howe and her son, a young clergyman, had come to dinner. Two or three others had been asked, and there were nearly always some friends dropping in.

Miss Wendell was shy and unformed. Millicent looked her over, and decided at once she should not care for her, and after the introductions seated herself gracefully beside Mrs. Howe, who was elderly, with snowy white hair, and had been past thirty when she was married. Her son was seven or eight and twenty, a nice looking young fellow with eager eyes, as if he was quite ready for the struggle with the evils of the day. Mrs. Drayton was one of his admirations, and he was always glad of invitations. Mr. Drayton had such spendid judgment that he often asked his advice, since he was struggling with a small chapel interest not very far away.

Carrie Wendell said yes and no, and was very hard to get on with. Mrs. Wendell came over to talk with Ray. What were their plans?

Scotland and Ireland first, and journeying about Western England, Ray thought, then the continent, and coming down to Rome for part of the winter, over to France afterwards.

"You are going to take it leisurely," said the lady. "I did so hope we might meet somewhere, but I want to

see all I can. Going abroad has been a dream since girlhood, and I am sorry to be alone. Mr. Wendell doesn't care for travel. You are fortunate in having your father, a man is such a protection and can look after everything."

Mr. Stanwood came in then, and Mrs. Wendell went over to him to discuss a few points.

"I wonder if you will like a foreign school?" Ray asked of the quiet girl.

"O, I am sure I shan't. I am afraid of strangers, and foreign girls must be so different. I don't see why American girls should need foreign educations."

She looked frightened as if she had said too much.

"Have you never been away at school?"

"No. I've been going to a day-school here in the city."

Ray's heart was full of pity for the poor child.

"I was at a boarding-school with three other cousins. We had a nice time, and there were many charming girls. Still, I was homesick at first."

"I shall not like it I know," in a dull, rather resentful tone. "But mamma thinks you do not get good foreign pronunciations here."

"You rarely do get them perfect. I've been going over French and German this winter, and papa understands German quite well. So we are in a measure prepared."

"I've studied them some. I hate them!" and she drew her brows into a frown.

Ray felt sorry for the poor girl, and wondered what the foreign education would do for her. She almost suffered vicariously for her. Then she glanced at Mrs. Wendell who was rather pretty and stylish, and looked very animated talking to her father.

Some one was looking at her, too. How nice she was to talk to that stick of a girl! Then Hope Drayton entered the room with her cordial winsomeness, and seemed like a flash of sunshine.

"What a difference there is in girls," Roger Howe said to himself. "But then Miss Drayton has had every advantage. And how unselfish of Miss Stanwood to try and entertain that dull girl, when she has only a little time for her relatives."

"You can have your music, Mr. Howe," said Mrs. Drayton. "Millicent, you and Hope play the duet first, as she has to go back to her lessons, and then let Mr. Howe select. He is very fond of Beethoven."

Millicent had been much entertained by Mrs. Howe who after years of simple country living had moved to the city to be with her son, and was a little bewildered by the rush and hurry of everything, and the crowded aspect.

"If we didn't live near the park I do not believe I could endure it," she had said plaintively. "And if I had not met so many delightful people! I had an idea one would feel very lonely and not know any one, since it isn't the fashion to speak to your next-door neighbor. But there are a great many good Samaritans in the city. I think people's hearts are quite as tender and generous as in the country."

Millicent had only to smile and answer in monosyllables. But they were so different from Miss Wendell's, and her face was illumined by charming courtesy.

The young girl rose.

"Don't you want to come in the music-room?" Mr. Howe asked of his mother.

"O yes, I shall be delighted."

"Ray, suppose you take in Miss Wendell."

The girl gave a frightened look as if it was an embarrassment to stir. But Ray took her hand and smiled, and she felt quite brave as the elder girl walked so serenely across the room.

The others kept on with their conversation, listening in the pauses. The duet was really enchanting. Then Hope made a pretty gesture of adieu and slipped from the room, followed by Miss Wendell's longing eyes. If she might feel so free, so satisfied with herself!

Millicent had no especial consciousness of Mr. Howe. He turned the music for her, he made little comments, but they did not embarrass her in the slightest. She felt at home in this kind of music, and it was as if she was playing for herself.

"I hope I haven't tired you out," he began presently in a pause. "Don't you sing?"

"No," returned Millicent, frankly. "Except to sing little things for myself. Then I don't especially care for singing, only to listen when some one sings very beautifully."

"Perhaps it would be unfair to the others to have every gift. You have such a soft, melodious voice."

"But it is only made to talk with, and to read aloud." She fell short of so many things.

"I should like to hear you read."

"I used to read aloud a great deal to grandmamma, but she is gone;" and Millicent sighed softly.

Mrs. Wendell came in. Carrie had almost a smile on her impassive face. In low tones Mrs. Howe and Ray had been talking across her, and she felt as if she had been part of the conversation.

"We must go now," her mother began. "Miss Carew, you play exquisitely. Miss Stanwood, your father has almost persuaded me to go up to Scot-

land first. I am so glad we are going over in the same steamer."

Ray didn't feel exactly glad, but she was courteous.

"If I had the courage to cross the ocean I should like to go with you and your father," exclaimed Mrs. Howe. "Roger talks of it, but I think he will have to leave me behind. Then, Miss Carew, I shall come to you for a little comfort in music."

Millicent looked uncertain and was silent.

It was such a fine night, Mr. Stanwood begged the girls to walk home with him, so he declined the carriage.

"We shall have a retinue going abroad," exclaimed Ray with a mischievous laugh. "I don't know that I am glad of Mrs. Wendell, but the steamer will be large, and there will be other people. I have heard a good deal about the friends one makes in crossing."

"Mrs. Wendell is really agreeable when she forgets herself," returned Ray's father. "Very well informed, too, in a kind of book fashion. Only I'd rather people did not think a trip abroad completed one's education."

"And that poor girl!" cried Ray with a voice full of sympathy. "To think how she will suffer in a foreign school! My heart aches for her."

"Two of her cousins have been accomplished abroad and married well." There was a tinge of mirth in the voice. "It is a pity comparatively nice people should spoil themselves by trying to get out of their limitations."

"The girl is dreadful," declared Millicent: "I pity you, Ray. Why Aunt Milly should take up such people"—and her tone died away in disgust.

"Missionary work," suggested Uncle Archie.

"But that Mrs. Howe was lovely," exclaimed Ray. "Something about her suggested my own grandmamma,

only she is so quaintly old-fashioned, and adores her son with singleness of heart."

If Ray thought Millicent would make a comment on the son she was mistaken.

The son escorted his mother homeward with attention and bits of pleasant talk. Miss Carew was his main subject, the music had moved him immeasurably.

"I feel quite in love with the other girl," said Mrs. Howe. "She acted so prettily towards that Miss Wendell, and tried to bring her into the talk with such a sweet graciousness. She isn't as lovely, but Miss Carew seems cold beside her. I think only music moves her."

CHAPTER VII.

HOURS OF DELIGHT.

SPRING was blooming wherever the brick and stone of civilization had not crowded it out. The sky had a delicate blue, the grass was like emerald where it was let to grow. The travelers had started on their journey and people were planning for summer pleasures and summer charities. Dell had so many things on her hands, but Ruth Ensign was such a delightful helper and put such a thorough young heart in everything.

Mrs. Henderson had taken a fancy to her as well, had made her the almoner of her charities.

"I quite envy your Mrs. Kenneth," she said one day. "I know I shouldn't suit you half as well, and I am not religious. I don't see how people keep any religion in the whirl of a great city."

"We don't whirl quite so much," replied Ruth laughingly.

"So I want you to be my adviser. When you run short or want to do anything special, do not be afraid to come to me."

"You are very good to offer so much. O, can't you get interested yourself?" with an eager look.

"No, I cannot, really. I sort of assent to the theories, but I don't like the people. I should never know what to say to them. I offered that young Mr. Howe some money for his plans—is that doing good vicariously or do you only suffer vicariously? I've forgotten."

How charming Mrs. Henderson could make herself when her eyes softened and that pretty color like a young girl's came up in her face.

"Is it a sign of oncoming old age when you are fond of young people?" she queried smilingly.

"O Mrs. Henderson, no one could think of old age looking at you," Ruth said earnestly and with great candor.

"Thank you." The smile was fascinating. Mrs. Henderson pressed the small hand close to hers. That was as much as a more demonstrative woman meant by a kiss.

"Yes—I would like to have some girls, I think. I did so enjoy the merry little luncheon last week. What is Miss Carew's college sister like; very bookish and strong-minded?"

"O, no." Ruth laughed at the idea. "She is gay and full of fun—I should have thought a year or two ago that Milly would have been more likely to go to college."

"Much learning might not make her 'mad,' but it would spoil her. She is very charming as it is. I wonder if you wouldn't go to drive with me—*could* you spare time, little busy bee—say to-morrow? I get so tired of driving about alone. Charlton enjoys riding much better. The park is so lovely now, and then we could go up along the country ways. O, *do* say yes!"

The voice was so entreating and the last little inflection gave it feeling.

"I—do not know—let me see—" in indecision.

"Yes, you must. I will send in and see if Miss Carew can go. Or if you would take my note to her. You see I stand a little in awe of her mother. Not being a mother of girls I don't quite know what is proper."

"But you always do things beautifully. Yes, I wish you had some girls, you would make them so happy."

"Thank you again. I am afraid you are a dainty little flatterer. O, don't go," with charming entreaty.

"I have stayed ever so long. I always *do* stay," laughingly.

"Don't you suppose I need some company as well as the old women in homes, or the children in hospitals? Didn't some one once suggest a gospel to the rich? But I shouldn't want any prosy old fellow preaching it. I'd rather choose two nice young girls."

"Do you realize that I'm not so very young?" said Ruth gravely. "I don't know how I have fallen into being Millicent's compeer. I am contemporary with Miss Stanwood—we were at school together."

"Well—that isn't being so very old. And then perhaps you are the better companion for Miss Carew. I think any mother would like you for a friend to her daughter."

"Now I ought to say, 'Thank you.' " Ruth sprang up and made a little courtesy.

Mrs. Henderson rose and went over to her writing-desk. That was her very own and was very beautiful. She had added several articles to the already handsome furnishing. The paper and the monogram were exquisite.

"I shall be so much obliged. Be sure to send me a consent. I shall order the carriage."

They gave each other an adieu, and Ruth tripped lightly down the stairs. She had a message of her own for Mrs. Carew, about a poor baby who would have to go to the hospital.

"O," said Dell after they had settled the baby's case, "Milly has gone out with grandpapa. Yes, I know she will be pleased with this, as well."

“Mrs. Henderson puts so many things on the ground of a great favor to her. She is certainly very charming.”

“I will not have her rivaling our dear Mrs. Kenneth. You must not yield to the fascination.”

“O Mrs. Carew, no one could do that.” And then—a color flamed up in the sweet face, “Mrs. Kenneth has the greater love and the greater wisdom, her heart goes down deep into all the phases of life, and she loves me. I don’t know about Mrs. Henderson’s real love, but it isn’t Christian love. I wish it was when she is so good and generous. I am so sorry she hasn’t a daughter.”

An odd thought crossed Lyndell’s mind. But no, this girl could never be her daughter in that way of relationship. Young Mr. Henderson would want to marry some gay society girl, and no doubt the mother would wish that for him.

Dell wondered after her visitor had gone what such women as Mrs. Henderson found satisfying in their lives. She made no bid for admiration, though Dell could see that if she exerted herself to any extent society would gladly pay her homage. She was a peculiar and attractive study, and a puzzle as well. It seemed possible for her to come up to some of the higher living, and what a fine influence she could exert! She was widely informed, and when she chose, could be most fascinating. Lyndell grudged her to the frivolities of the world.

Of the son she did not feel so sure. He was very well-bred in society, devoted to his mother in a charmingly natural manner, with no effusiveness.

They met him in society, for now that she was the mother of a fully grown-up daughter she had to consider society with a rather different eye. Millicent was lacking in sturdy self-reliance. A girl like Ruth Ensign was a tonic to such a nature, and Ruth had more youthful

buoyancy than when they first knew her. How finely her character had developed! Were girls more in earnest a few years ago?

Mrs. Henderson made a delightful call of a few moments upon Mrs. Kenneth. Millicent was sitting at the window watching, and sped eagerly through the hall, smiling as she ran down the stoop.

"You don't know how really grateful I am," said the voice in its affluent sweetness. "If I had known one more girl—we ought to have another to make the party complete. What a pity your cousin has gone, Miss Carew! And that lovely Hope Drayton is kept like a nun in a convent, which is an excellent thing, after all, so we can lay no surreptitious plots for her. Neither do we want an alien element introduced," smiling with a decisive sweetness, as if that settled the matter.

What a day it was, full of bloom, richness and sunshine, the air fragrant with a hundred odors, the new growth of pine, hemlock and fir adding spicy suggestion of forests. The beautiful park was at its best, and thronged with carriages, horseback riders and merry groups of pedestrians. May was written in the gladness of the faces.

After they had wound around the attractive ways, they turned northward and were soon in the country, that was after all only an unfinished continuation of the city. But the river gleamed through here and there, aglow with the westward going sun, the hills and bluffs opposite being more in the shade were penetrated by grays and browns deepening to black.

Mrs. Henderson had many reminiscences. Little incidents of what had happened here and there, a bit of scenery with a touch of humanity thrown across it in a high light, some one's singing, an evening in a

country village with peasants dancing on some festival eve.

“I *do* think the poor have more enjoyment abroad. They work hard, they live meagrely, but they have many real pleasures, the kind they can understand and enjoy for themselves. It is so different in the great cities, the hives of industry the country boasts of so proudly.”

“But we are changing that slowly. It *is* hard work, for duty is often made unattractive, and pleasure looked upon as a thing one ought not choose. But when one considers the enjoyment the rich and the middle class can have in music, in social intercourse and intellectual pursuits that would not appeal to the poor starved souls, it does seem as if something they loved and understood must be provided for them. I have found you cannot raise people so rapidly ;” smiling with a sweet seriousness.

“What a missionary you are, Miss Ensign. Do you never tire of all this work and perplexity ? ”

“When I do some one gives me a treat—like this,” smiling and raising luminous eyes.

“And you keep so cheerful and eager. I suppose you do find some rewards ? It wouldn’t be in human nature to serve forever without compensation.”

“I can’t help thinking a good deal of humanity is very kindly and generous, and trustful as well. And when the higher endeavor is added to it”—she made a little pause—she was so used to talking to Mrs. Kenneth. “But I don’t want to preach,” with laughing self-reproach ; the sweetness lingering on her lips.

“You are quite a new study, Miss Ensign. I know women who have had bitter troubles and turned religious, and people who were educated in a religious way, because their ancestors thought it the right thing ; and the

fashionable religious, because it is respectable and gives one tone. But you are so sincere, so in earnest ; ” and the approval in the eyes bent gently upon her was very flattering. “ And you are so young to take up this life. ”

“ But it is the life I love, ” with enthusiasm.

“ What a wife she would make for that young clergyman, ” thought Mrs. Henderson. “ And I dare say he will throw himself away on some fashionable girl in want of a husband. ”

“ Are you not sometimes deceived in people ? I have met more than one fraud. That is why I would rather hand my sources of benevolence over to a person who has had some experience. I know I should be shamefully taken in. ”

“ O, yes. It is quite hard to distinguish. I found a most provoking instance this morning. We took up a family in the winter, the mother in very poor health, all of them half starved through lack of employment, depending on a boy who sold papers and did odd jobs. We found employment for the oldest girl who now earns five dollars a week ; the boy, two, sometimes a little over. They have that for food, clothes, and fuel, the rent being provided for. The mother has seen better days she claims and excuses short-comings on this ground. There is a younger child, a girl. Some one was in a few days ago and gave the mother five dollars. She went out and bought a dress and a hat for the little girl and spent the rest in getting some photographs taken to send to her husband’s family at the west, from whom they never hear. The hat was a poor flimsy thing overloaded with cheap flowers. The child needed shoes—so did the boy. He is such a good sturdy fellow. The mother is dreadfully improvident, but the girl seems to have some judgment. And when you try to explain true economy to

the mother she falls back on the fact that she never was used to pinching and screwing in her early days. It is very provoking sometimes. And that is why it is frequently best not to give the money outright."

"But I suppose it was a great pleasure to the poor woman who probably did not often spend money as she liked," said Mrs. Henderson in a rather amused tone, yet with a touch of perversity.

"I am not at all sure. When she told me about it she complained of their relatives' neglect. Perhaps she thought it might rouse their memory."

Were there people, families, living on seven dollars a week! Would they not rather be dead, Mrs. Henderson wondered. Country poverty did not seem so bad, peasant living had few wants and the broad out of doors.

They were coming down through the park again and a thrush was singing in a thicket. Millicent's quick ear caught the sound and her sensitive complexion flushed in a most alluring fashion. She had said but little.

She is not interested in all this work, the elder lady thought. Yet she was too well bred to seem at all bored with it. In fact she was not bored. She had a vague idea that some time she would come to believe in the chief good. Mamma had not been so full of schemes back there at Sherburne House when she was a girl. So Millicent listened with a kind of attentive suavity, smiling and answering when deferred to, and busy with the side issue of her own thoughts.

At first there had been an unsatisfactory incompleteness, and she hated to have any fancy go wrong. She had felt quite sure who would occupy the fourth seat in the carriage. In the park or somewhere they would pick up Charlton Henderson, but they had not. The expectation had not been strong enough for keen disap-

pointment. The young man was the most agreeable person she had met in society. She did not know how to answer the badinage that passes for wit among young people. She was too truthful and had too small an estimate of her own attractions to accept the florid compliments that were offered nearly every girl indiscriminately. Henderson had a fund of impersonal small talk, and on music they were both at home, except that he was really too indolent to ever become a musician. He had called a few times, and had brought her flowers. She was fond of recalling that first time.

“I brought you some roses for an excuse to call,” he had said, and she looking up pleased and surprised had answered with a little flush—“Was an excuse needed?”

“I thought so,” gravely. “Do you know I have never been invited? If I have committed any breach you must lay it to my ignorance of the customs of a strange city, and my desire to see you at home.”

When the roses began to fade a little she had cut the moist stems and laid them in a box. They were still sweet. She could not have given any reason for it; she was not on the verge of any sudden preference, only, they were hers especially.

She met him almost everywhere among young people. Society was very fond of him, as he had two requisites, wealth and good looks.

They paused to return Miss Ensign.

“I have had such a delightful afternoon. Thank you very much,” Ruth exclaimed with a bright smile. “But dear Mrs. Henderson, do not ask me very often or I shall be spoiled.”

“I should take it as a compliment to my powers of attraction if I could spoil such a sensible, well-balanced nature as yours,” returned the lady with smiling approval.

Then the carriage stopped at her own door.

Millicent glanced up in surprise and was about to speak, but settled back in her seat.

“I am a wilful woman who must have her own way ;” and there was a persuasive sweetness in the tone. “I am going to keep you to dinner and then you are to pay me by some music. See what a mercenary person I am ! exacting to the uttermost farthing ——”

“But mamma” — gently interrupting.

“O, I will despatch a note to her at once. And you shall be safely convoyed home. Do not cloud over my pleasant afternoon.”

She stepped out hesitatingly, and she heard the carriage ordered for half-past nine. Surely mamma could not object !

Mrs. Henderson preceded her up the pretty winding stairway to a daintily appointed dressing-room.

“Take off your hat and smooth your ruffled plumes, not too smooth, however, while I write a note.”

A great bunch of violets stood on a small onyx table, and the apartment was fragrant with the odor. The toilette appointments were exquisite. Millicent laid aside her wrap, passed the comb through her wind blown hair, rubbed the dust from her face, and for an instant examined it critically. The chin was rounder, the cheeks a little fuller, the dimple near the corner of her mouth deeper. She had accepted herself and now seldom longed for the perfection of beauty.

“Do you know I am not exactly in dinner dress,” she began as Mrs. Henderson entered the room with the announcement that the letter had gone.

“No matter. We will not be formal. I have not made friends enough as yet to drop in upon me unexpectedly, and Charlton is uncertain. I get very lonely sometimes.

And it isn't quite like a house of one's very own, where you buy pretty things and rearrange and occupy one's time in all manner of plans. I think I must have a real home before I am ready to die of old age. If Charlton should marry, — I do wonder if I could be amiable enough to attract a daughter-in-law? I should want her to be like an own daughter."

A delicious wave of color went up the very roots of the soft brownish gold hair. Millicent could not make the question personal, if she had she would have been covered with shame. And then they both laughed without any confessed cause.

"I have a pretty lace fichu here, let us see how it will look. Haven't you read of old women who died and left behind them such an array of attire? Queen Elizabeth for instance. And some of the old colonial women that we fancy had such hard times and went clad in hodden gray! Yet they had fine lace caps and velvet gowns and neck and wrist ruffles of Venetian lace and all that. Perhaps I shall be like them."

She had been looking over a drawer and now took out an exquisite bit of lace that she draped about Millicent's neck and made a jabot of the ends.

"Girls are prettiest not overloaded. That is the vice of modern dressing here, I find. It ought to be left to the dowagers. Girlhood is so pretty and sweet in itself. Now we will go down."

The bell sounded just as they reached the hall. The immaculate young butler ushered them in the dining-room and seated them. Just then the hall door opened, and a step was heard.

"It is Mr. Henderson."

"Yes. Tell him to be quick as possible. Then go on with the dinner. Young men have as much vanity as

women about their appearance. Yet they ought to pay proper respect. You have a brother?"

"He has not reached the period of conventional carefulness," said Millicent with a sense of amusement remembering Randolph's outspoken democratic heresies in the past in contrast to their Cousin Sherburne's aristocratic proclivities. "And then there is the younger one," she added.

"The elder is at West Point?"

"Yes."

"In what year?"

"It is his first year. But he is sure of promotion, and is very enthusiastic."

Charlton Henderson entered, bowed low and politely to his mother and begged to be excused for lateness, and then passed around to Millicent greeting her with evident pleasure.

A quick color came to her cheek. She flushed easily if there was a peculiar immobility to her face except where she was strongly moved.

"What were you doing all the afternoon? If you had been at home I should have asked you to join us. We went driving through all the lovely haunts the city affords," his mother exclaimed inquiringly.

"Which are not a great many, after all, I am sorry. I stayed stupidly at the club, and then went with Giles Free-land to help him choose between two pictures at a friend's studio. Miss Carew, did you ever help a friend decide upon any article—I do suppose girls take some one along occasionally?"

"No. I think—I am afraid the girls I know would hardly care for my judgment. I know only enough to suit myself."

"You are fortunate to know that. Take my advice,

acquired by rather mortifying experiences. Your friend will always choose the other thing in sublime disregard of the fact that he pretended to defer to you."

Mrs. Henderson gave a soft, low laugh.

"It will freshen up your artistic side a little. You are getting rather dull. We ought to take a journey somewhere. Why, I should like to see West Point again. It is years since I have been there. Let us go some day—though we do not know any one ——"

"O, wait until my sister comes home. We are all going then to see our cadet. It will be a kind of vacation time though he won't be allowed to come home until another year."

"I admire his bravery," said Charlton. "I think I could fight for my life if need were, perhaps for my country if I had one, but to take that four years' training——" pausing with an abrupt, but still musical laugh.

"And haven't you any country—like poor Nolan?"

"No, not like Hale's miserable wretch. But I have been in foreign lands so much that I sometimes forget where I belong."

"He was born in this very city, but when he was seven we went abroad."

"I've been thinking, mother, that it would not be a bad idea for us to explore the wild and wondrous West. Such marvels as are told about all the Pacific Coast. I am tired of the old world. But I am not as badly off as Alexander. Geography wasn't up to date or he might have saved his tears of disappointment."

Millicent laughed with a delicate ripple, a quiver of delight it seemed.

They lingered over the dessert. When they finally rose from the table Mrs. Henderson said —

"Charlton you may go to your den and smoke, or to

the club, but I shall resign myself to Miss Carew's exquisite playing if she will indulge me that much. She has just the touch and taste for an after dinner symposium."

"Why, I will do it gladly," she replied with charming eagerness, pleased that she could make some return.

"I don't know why I should be dismissed so uncere-
moniously ; " in a complaining tone.

"But you will have to forego your cigar."

"A great sacrifice," returned Charlton in a whimsical tone of half protest. "What if I decide to stay? Miss Carew, shall I interfere with your inspirations?"

"I am not inspired. I love certain kinds of music. Perhaps I practise them to the detriment of more modern things, the generally admired style. O Mrs. Henderson, did you ever feel the limitations of your—mind, I suppose it is, and that there were many things you could not do well?"

Her tone was so frank with its naïve asking that the elder woman smiled. The very simplicity had a dignity about it that prohibited compliment.

"But since you do some lovely things well, is not that enough?"

Millicent seated herself at the piano. For a few moments her slim fingers wandered among the chords, evoking softest melody like the faint rustling of leaves with the dusk of twilight setting over everything.

Charlton sprang up suddenly. She heard the movement though it was of the quietest, and paused, partly turned.

"Pardon me. That is too beautiful for garish gas-light. Mother, do you mind if I turn the burners low? We should have candles instead."

"But Miss Carew ——"

“She knows her music by heart. Wasn’t there a bit of improvising in that?”

She flushed warmly.

“Go on stringing beads of melody on a golden chain. There, isn’t that better? I hate bright lights if there is no necessity for them.”

“Thank you,” she replied. “Mrs. Henderson, you are quite sure you like this dreamy, suggestive music?”

“As you play it;” in a quiet tone.

Charlton settled himself on the sofa with cushions about him and his feet on a rest; a picture of luxurious indolence. He could see Millicent’s face when she turned it a little towards the end of the piano, and when her white fingers wandered down to the depth of the bass which was soft and deep. Now and then there would be a slight pause and a new beginning. Once he recognized a dreamy, wistful thing of Chopin’s, a nocturne, meditative, full of moonlight and mystery, diffusing a penetrative sense of delight.

Charlton Henderson yielded himself to the spell that was in a measure sensuous, a kind of emotional rapture that thrilled every pulse. With Millicent it was rather a heavenly idealism that in moments like these swept over her and was indeed part of her inner life that so far no one had taken the trouble to fathom.

Through half closed eyes—Mrs. Henderson was watching. The music moved Charlton deeply, she could see that by the way the fingers interlaced, and the droop of the head, the eyes wandering over the figure of the slim musician who indulged in no painful swayings, but seemed a perfect personification of melody.

The silvery tone of the clock in the adjoining room gave its nine tuneful measures. She played on after that

had ceased to the end of a soft, sweet undertone that seemed to die in exquisite tenderness.

Then she turned, her face flushed with a glow of excitement and enthusiasm, for in a subtle manner that music only can translate, she had felt that she was giving pleasure.

Charlton sprang up as if but half awake, yet there was no sleepiness in his eyes which were like points of flame. The music had fired his inert nature.

"O, have we tired you unconsciously? It was so delightful, that is the only excuse. I could have listened all night."

He took her hand in his and she felt the quiver go through her whole body.

"I must thank you for a very great pleasure. I think you could exorcise any evil spirit, and give comfort to the weariest soul. I am afraid I shall want you too often."

Mrs. Henderson stood beside her with satisfaction in every line of her face, and her voice had a delicate approval far removed from conventional flattery.

"And now we must have something to restore the flagging energies. Mother, there should be nectar and ambrosia to end the feast."

"Cream and cake," said Mrs. Henderson with the suggestion of a laugh in her voice. "The old gods probably had something more ethereal."

"O, I am not tired, I often play that way for myself when I am alone." Millicent's face was full of the happy light of youth, and her tone joyous.

They walked out to the dining-room. The butler brought in cream, bonbons and cake.

"Did you ever try writing music?" asked Mr. Henderson.

“No.” Millicent was curiously surprised.

“I should think you might—except the trouble. Or perhaps you hate to bother over things? The dreams that float through the brain are so much more captivating than real labor. I hate actual work.”

“You must not talk heresy to Miss Carew,” interposed his mother. “Her family are of a strenuous kind, living to some purpose, while we are cumberers of the ground.”

“O, Mrs. Henderson,” the girl exclaimed earnestly, “you do not do yourself any justice. You make people very happy. You give ——”

She paused in embarrassment, a bright color flying up to her brow under the smiling eyes bent upon her.

“I give what doesn’t cost me anything, hardly a thought. I believe there is no great virtue in that. And if small pleasures make one happy ——”

“It is the thinking about people and what they may enjoy.” Her eyes had a delicious approbation in them.

“Don’t talk of these abstruse subjects,” interposed Charlton with a light ironical laugh. “You have never been to Germany, Miss Carew?”

“No, but I am hoping to go. Germany is the home of music ——”

“O, why didn’t you let me say that?” leaning back with a pretense of resentful indignation. “It was on the tip of my tongue ready to blossom into a sentence. People very often snap up my ideas, and make me dull by contrast.”

“Did I snap it up? I beg your pardon.”

There was an arch demureness about her that would have been coquettish in any other girl.

“There are many delightful things in Germany, and the lives of the musicians come home to you there with

a peculiar interest. How hard they worked that we might enjoy ! How many discouragements they had, but I suspect their true life was in the brain, forever alight with melody. Some time we will talk this over. Strange that I should be a musical enthusiast and not be master of a single instrument ! ”

Millicent looked her surprise. “Do you not play at all ? ”

“Not as you played to-night. I have achieved a few tunes on the piano, but I haven’t the perseverance that the scales require. I once tried a violin, most young fellows do, but its horrible wails and howls drove me half crazy. I don’t know what they would have done to other people if I had not mercifully desisted.”

Millicent laughed as they rose. The butler announced the carriage.

Mrs. Henderson bade her the kindest good-night. Charlton put her in and then seated himself beside her.

“O do come again soon,” he said. “I have enjoyed the evening so much. And I know what it has been to Madame Mere.”

She raised her soft eyes with a kind of glad assent.

CHAPTER VIII.

MYSTERIOUS POSSIBILITIES.

THERE was a sound of earnest conversation in the Carew drawing-room as the hall door was opened for Millicent. She hesitated a moment, then turned to the staircase. Her mother came out smilingly.

“Did you have a pleasant time? I dare say you are tired. Two of the professors are here enjoying a discussion with your father.”

“It was delightful. I have played all the evening. I like Mrs. Henderson so much.”

Her girlish face was suffused with a sense of pleasurable satisfaction.

“Good-night, dear,” said the mother softly. Millicent was so seldom enthusiastic over people.

She ran lightly up to her room. All the world seemed in a glow to her, as if it had been illumined by some far-reaching light. She was not analytical, nor introspective though she lived so much within herself. She was happy and satisfied because she had pleased another where there was no requirement of duty, no talk that roused vague misgivings. She had simply been herself, played as she liked and given and received enjoyment. She could see Mrs. Henderson in the high-backed easy chair of blue velvet that threw up her light gray brocaded silk gown and the fine laces, while the few handsome diamonds were set like stars. And the other figure lounging in the corner of the deep sofa, listening, glancing her way, tak-

ing in the fine soft strains like a breath of delicious fragrance. No florid compliments afterwards to disturb the delicately toned impression.

"I should like to go often," she said. "I think I like only a few people the best."

She laid away her little belongings; Millicent was neatness itself, and had the precision commonly relegated to those born to single blessedness. She took up her *Thomas à Kempis* and read a little in the sweet and satisfying places, for that was her mood to-night.

Reese wanted to know the next morning if there had been a dinner party.

"Why no," replied Millicent. "Only Mrs. Henderson and I, but Mr. Henderson came in afterwards."

"I don't like him," declared Reese. "There isn't any fun in him. Cousin Ned is grave enough, but he strikes so many queer bits to tell one that you have a good laugh. And he enjoys it so."

"Young society men are not supposed to be entertaining to schoolboys," said his mother. "Then you have hardly seen enough of him to form an opinion."

"But there are some splendid young men at Professor Kenneth's, and they don't mind talking to you."

"You will learn, my son, that only a few things and a very few people are put in the world for your especial behoof," remarked his father laughingly.

"And then what did you do?" glancing at his sister. Millicent flushed. "I played for them."

"And sent them to sleep?"

"Reese, don't tease your sister."

"Those dull old things are enough to send any one to sleep. Milly, why don't you take up some of the bright, catchy music?"

Reese's idea just now was the *Mikado* which he thought

deserved to stand quite at the head of the musical world.

"Your ideas of the useful and the entertaining will expand," said his father dryly.

Ruth Ensign came in presently, her face full of delight. She and others had been planning a home across the river on Long Island for sick babies and their mothers, or nurses if their mothers could not be spared. A large old country house, too old-fashioned and out of repair for its owners, had been loaned for the summer.

"Mrs. Phillips has found a matron, and Mrs. Henderson offered fifty dollars a month towards expenses, and we are going to begin at once. Mrs. Henderson will spoil me, I am afraid. She has an adroit way of asking questions and when she finds what your heart is set upon says — 'Now if I were to do this, or that; or would twenty or fifty dollars help you out?' I was talking of this, and happened to say that Mrs. Phillips did not want to begin until we had enough subscribed for the whole summer. So many people go away and forget, or perhaps their own summering costs more than they planned. Last summer we had a very hard squeeze," laughingly. "I don't want Mrs. Phillips to get so worried at the last."

There was an eager lovely light in the girl's eyes. How much grace this living for others gave.

"Mrs. Henderson is very generous to you," Mrs. Carew said thoughtfully.

"Not to me alone. She's taken a fancy to that young clergyman, Mr. Howe, and had him and his mother to dine. She is elegant and one can see has been accustomed to the best of society, yet she often comes out so simply sweet that she is fascinating."

"Millicent is growing very fond of her." Dell wondered if the little uneasiness was a mother's natural jeal-

ousy or if Mrs. Henderson was not a wise friend for a girl. She could not harm Ruth—was there harm in her any way? There were moods of easy-going philosophy that bordered on materialism, there was sometimes a sharp, pregnant sentence that seemed to stab one's best and highest beliefs.

"And she is fond of Millicent," returned the girl. "But dear Mrs. Carew, we want you to go over to the Home and give us some ideas. You have had a hand in so many things that you have learned to spend money judiciously."

Lyndell consented. She would fain have taken Millicent, but the child had not come to care about the neighbors on the road to Jerusalem, and only a few of those round about her.

If there had been no young man! Yet he did not seem to pay any especial attention to Millicent. He was simply a fashionable trifler, unexceptional in his demeanor to his mother, but it seemed more fine breeding than devotion. There was a certain paucity in his nature that jarred upon her. Perhaps she had grown to expect too much of young people. He was greatly sought after in society. He danced well if with a certain laziness that made it all the more fascinating. There were no wild stories told about him. He was most moved by music, she thought, and certainly had read widely in the higher literature not generally a favorite with young people, but he evinced no particular enthusiasm. It seemed as if at some time the intense vitalities of youth had been arrested, and that life itself was gone through with in a perfunctory manner.

But then Mrs. Henderson took other girls to drive with her, asked them in to dinner and gave an exquisite luncheon to those she knew best. Among so many there

were more attractive girls than Millicent, and she set her mother heart at rest.

There were so many events crowding in. Friends were going abroad, and steamer days were quite affairs. The rush of weddings was over, the dances were given up, discussions ran upon summer resorts. And Honor was coming home with her sophomore triumph, and two schoolmates, who were on their way to western homes. Bertram Beaumanoir was to graduate with honors, and his mother and the eldest son were coming up.

Lyndell Carew had consented with unfeigned gratification to the change in the disposal of Sherburne House. Tessy's first-born had been named for Dell's father who had never possessed his birthright in full, but he had always been called Sherburne to distinguish him from the other Edwards. It was a little awkward at first, but they had all settled to the new name, and the heir of Sherburne House.

"For when Edward is married we shall go to Beaumanoir," Tessy said. "Leonard's father and mother are both growing old, and the change will be a welcome one to them."

"Married!" Dell cried in surprise. "O Tessy, how can you endure thinking of it?"

"Why not, since it is the usual thing?" and Tessy smiled with charming serenity. "I should be sorry for him to miss the sweetest part of human life."

"But—if he should not marry to please you? I begin to think of the great risk ——"

"We must try to be pleased with what our children do. And he has improved so much in breadth of character, in all the manly attributes, in affection for his father, for us all. I hope it will be a wise choice when his time to love comes. Truly, Dell, I have never regretted the

episode with Gertrude. First loves are not always a bad experience. She was a wise girl and they have been charming friends. She makes Uncle Con a perfect wife. After so many years of roving, and we might add being admired," a mirthful gleam coming into the sweet eyes, "every woman would not have known how to manage him, or herself. O Dell, how soon it will be our children's lives!"

"It seems like a story. Was I the wild, crazy little girl who said she hated Sherburne House? And all the cousins—the cousins' children, the new lives! Are we clannish to keep so much together?"

"Family life is one of the loveliest things on earth when it is guided in the ways of integrity and happiness. It is when one gets beyond God's leading that the bitterness comes in."

"Yet I do not always understand whether it is of His leading or paths we choose for ourselves."

"When we have to retrace them we can be pretty sure that they were of our choosing," said the soft voice. "But we have to go forward in hope, and when mistakes are made to right them with patience."

Suddenly the house was all astir. Here was Honor and her two friends, Miss North and Miss Losee, who had managed to get away a day earlier than was at first expected, as they chose to waive some of the festivities after their examinations. Dr. Carew had been let into the secret.

"O mamma! It's just magnificent to see you again. It seems as if it had been a whole year since Christmas. I couldn't well come at Easter, and it would have been such a skimpy little visit! You hardly realize how dear home is until you are compelled to stay away until a certain time. And we did so want to be at Bertram's

Commencement. Wasn't it just grand that we could get off?"

All this was uttered in a breath, with Honor's arms so tightly around her mother that her breath was almost gone.

She had grown taller. She was not as slim as Millicent, but finely rounded, and her face dimpled at almost every movement. She had a sort of gipsy brilliance in the dash of color that came and went, and the shimmer of her hair that shone and danced with every movement.

"And now what are you going to do with us? Are Aunt Tessy and Cousin—I suppose we all say Edward now, here?"

"They have gone to Aunt Millicent's, but are coming to dinner. The guests are to have your room and the one adjoining, and you will take grandmamma's."

"O, we all want to be together. We are used to crowds. And we are all in the same boat, have been this year and will be next. Annie North has been my roommate, and we have lived through the troublous times when we didn't agree, and come to the clear sailing when we do not rock the boat or insist upon having the rudder."

Millicent had made some faint objection to giving her room and suggested the other plan.

It made no difference to the girls since they were met with such a cordial welcome.

"I don't know which you will like the best," Honor had said. "If you don't admire mamma the most I shall be affronted, and if you don't think papa splendid beyond everything, I shall not speak to you for a whole week after we get back to college."

"There are two of them and two of us," Agatha Losee said. "I confess to a weakness for men since I

have no father or brothers, so I'll decide upon Dr. Carew. Won't that be a fair division?"

"A fair division without any choice. But I just know Honor's mother is lovely. We won't quarrel until we see them."

But in the carriage Miss Losee had whispered that she had gone down at once to the doctor, and when they were in the room, taking out dinner gowns and refreshing themselves, she declared she began to waver.

"Like the man with his two mermaids," suggested Annie North.

"No, I could not wish either away. What a miserable comparison, you horrid girl! I am more like Wordsworth's Pedlar — 'In my capricious heart I love them — both.' Where is your big sister?"

"Why, mamma, where *is* Milly?" cried Honor running out in the hall.

"Gone to drive with a friend. You know we were not expecting you, papa kept the secret so well."

"O mamma! Not a lover?" Honor's eyes were brimming over with fun and curiosity.

"No, my dear," in a grave tone.

"And hasn't she had any lover all winter? She wrote about being bridesmaid the second time. The third will be fatal. You'll have to depend on her for honors. College girls don't marry."

"Nonsense," returned her mother. "I am in no hurry. I think I will set an age limit."

Presently they went across the hall, three Graces in white, happy heartsome girls.

"This is Millicent's room," Honor explained. "It looks like her. She abounds in Madonnas as you see, and she does the most exquisite embroidery and plays the old masses until you can almost believe yourself in

some old cathedral on the continent that people rave about. I am going to California first, where I have some lovely cousins, and then up to Alaska and all around my dear, my native land before I go abroad. And then she plays nocturnes and symphonies and I think a good rousing college song would make her faint away. O girls, here is the family beauty. You see it was all saved up to the last. This is our baby Florence."

"But I'm not a baby;" with a lovely little pout. "O, Honor, have you come home to stay?" and she was clinging to her sister's neck.

"To stay awhile, at least. And these are my friends."

"What a cherub!" said Miss Losee under her breath.

"Reese is in the study. He wants to see you but he is afraid to come in."

"Then he can't see me;" with great dignity.

Florence looked nonplused.

"And grandpapa has just come in."

"Then duty calls, I must obey. Excuse me a moment, girls."

Grandpapa kissed her, held her off at arm's length, then pressed her to his heart. Was she like the little girl he had taken through a long illness and learned to love so dearly? Prettier perhaps, like and yet unlike. Why had Millicent grown so out of his heart, he wondered.

"O Reese!" she cried in surprise. "How you have grown! O, to think Randolph cannot be here! The great and beneficent country is awfully mean in its vacations. Reese, come and be introduced to the girls."

Reese had reached the period where he was a little afraid of girls, and drew back.

"I have some lessons to get. My school doesn't close until next week."

"But it will take only a few moments. And you needn't be afraid of college girls."

"I'm not afraid," he protested, with a sudden quaking of heart, and a red face.

"Then come."

"No, I'll wait till dinner-time. O, I say, Honor, Bert Beaumanoir is just splendid! He has one of the prizes. I want to get off to-morrow, and that's why I must tackle this horrid Greek. I can't afford to be tripped up."

She kissed him and left him. They could go and visit mamma, who was glad enough to see them, and almost wished they were all hers.

Then Aunt Tessy and Cousin Sherburne came. The big drawing-room was in a whirl of talk; for this tall handsome fellow was in no wise abashed. He had taken his legal standing and was the young partner in his father's firm. Then Cousin Ned Beaumanoir joined them.

"Bertram wanted to come dreadfully, but there was the dinner, and he has one of the speeches. And—I suppose I ought to let him tell this himself, but he has had an offer for next year. It is not wonderful, but Professor Kenneth thinks he had better take it. The duties are not very arduous, and he has worked like a beaver this year."

"O, college man, why do you not say a Trojan?" laughed Honor.

Ned flushed a little under Honor's sparkling eyes.

Reese stole in quietly and found the girls not at all formidable, since there were two young men to divide honors.

"I think Mrs. Henderson must have taken Millicent home with her. We ought to send at once."

“Wait until after dinner,” interposed the doctor.
“They may be at theirs.”

They sat a long while over the dessert. The girls were full of fun and quick replies to Edward’s half bantering talk. Dr. Carew enjoyed the gay badinage mightily, and was loth to tear himself away.

“I will stop on my way to the office and send Milly home,” he said.

Charlton Henderson walked with her. He had said —“I am so sorry to have you go. Do you realize the pleasure you give us two people? Mother is so fond of hearing you read. It is curious that you don’t sing with all that melody in your voice.”

“My voice hasn’t much range, or the compass a musical voice should possess. And one needs courage to sing for an audience.”

“But you *can* sing.”

“Only a little. Then Honor has such a gay, caroling voice that she has done the singing. Randolph had a fine voice, and Florence will sing. That is enough for one family.”

“Still, I like your playing best, I think. One can yield himself wholly to it. And the reading. But some evening you will sing for me.”

If he had made it question instead of assertion, she would have hesitated.

“If you want me to,” she made answer slowly. “But I warn you there are only a few things that I can sing.”

“O,” with a short, abrupt laugh, “if one wants to hear opera let him pay his money like a man and criticise as he pleases. It is hardly fair to demand it in a parlor.”

“I wonder—if you would criticise severely? I am not sure I ought to have consented,” with a hesitation in her voice that entreated him to spare her.

"I should not criticise at all when I asked a favor. Do you think me that ungenerous?"

"You have always been very kind to me," she returned with a sweet gravity. "I think sometimes——"

"Well?" inquiringly, when she made a long pause.

"Perhaps you are too complimentary. No, it isn't that," and there was a suggestion of perplexity in her tone. "You are not always complimenting, and I like that in you. It seems to me in society, men say the same things to nearly every attractive girl. I have heard them compare notes, the girls I mean. And it isn't true half the time. Girls are not so much alike."

"That is the small coin of society. It keeps in circulation and doesn't have to be called in on clearing days. O, Miss Carew, if we began to tell the truth to each other's faces there would be war at once;" and he laughed with gentle amusement in which there was no sting.

"I don't mean disagreeable truths, but there are sometimes disagreeable falsehoods, little things you know are not true, and you wish the person had not said them. They hurt you as much as some sharp criticism. They take away your confidence."

Her candor was something adorable.

"One would need to keep in the white light of truth with you, Miss Carew."

She made no reply to that. Most people with whom she associated were truthful, they could admire without fulsomeness. He understood from the first that her world had been narrow, by her own desire.

They reached Dr. Carew's. There was a sound of merry voices within.

"You will come in?"

"Not to-night, thank you. I like it best when you

are alone. You will want to devote all your time to your sister and the guests. I do hope *we* shall not be crowded out," with a meaning emphasis. "I may see your party at the commencement."

"O, will you go?" in a joyous tone.

"I certainly shall. Good-night."

There was a cadence in his voice that held her on the step as she watched him down the street. There was a certain distinction in his walk. She wondered in her slow-thinking fashion why some girl had not caught him. That was a vulgar way of putting it. But she had heard girls' comments upon him, flavored with a good deal of admiration. Some of them had accepted men with not half of his advantages. And because society had taken him up in such an eager fashion, it seemed the more noble that he should devote himself so frankly to his mother. She was proud of him for doing it.

Henderson felt in his pocket for his cigar case, then remembered he had refilled it and left it on his dressing-table. It was stupid wandering around without that companionship. There was no one he cared especially to see, and if he played at the club he was sure to lose. So he strolled homeward and let himself in with his latch-key.

His mother was pacing the room slowly making a soft swish with her silken skirts.

"O, I did not look for you home so soon," she said in a tone that seemed to welcome him.

"No. Well, I had no friendly cigar with me."

He threw himself in a chair with careless grace.

"I wish you would not smoke so incessantly, Charlton." Her tone was entreating, not complaining.

"I have little else to do."

"Charlton, your life has been a mistake. I wish I had

possessed wisdom enough to set you at some business when I found you would not like a profession. A young man with plenty of money seems the most useless thing on the face of the earth, unless ——”

“Miss Ensign has roused you with her strenuous activities. I might select her and go into some line of benevolence.”

“Don’t talk that way. They all have some purpose to life and it brings a content, a strength and satisfaction that, I begin to think, nothing else can give. I have never been thrown much with people of this stamp. Most of the religious people I have known have been narrow and, yes, selfish, self-willed, wanting to cast everybody over in their mould, settling to a creed as the anchor of this world and the next, and thinking little of the life. But,” checking herself and changing her tone — “your father had his heart set on a certain course. He had bent every energy to money making. You were to be a gentleman.”

There was a touch of scorn in the low, deep tone.

“Isn’t it Dr. Holmes who says, ‘If you want to make a gentleman you must begin with his grandfathers’?”

“Perhaps he is right. I do not know about the Henderson grandfather. Mine could be multiplied by generations and go back to heroes, at least such as they were hundreds of years ago.”

Then she remembered her own grandfather and his harsh, sordid ways, his petty meannesses, his ignoble ideas, his ingratitude for all her care. Some one else had rewarded her for it. Perhaps *he* would be glad to know that she had so much money.

“I am thankful there is ancestry on one side, at least.”

She never repeated the discomforts of her early life. In truth she rarely thought of them. Self-made people

were not any the more highly respected by the great world, and the title of more than two hundred years ago stood higher, she found, than a catalogue of virtues.

“I’ve always been proud of your father’s good name, Charlton. He made his money honorably. Twice in his life he risked defeat rather than deal dishonestly. But it seems not to make much difference nowadays.

“The Carews and their circle are out of the usual line,” she began after a pause, as he ventured no comment.

Charlton cleared his voice once or twice. Then he said a little huskily —

“Mother, you know we have skirmished about this point of marriage more than once. I might as well marry. That, too, was father’s wish and will.”

“Yes. You have seen a fair array of feminine prettiness and style and variety this winter.”

“They are all so much alike. I wonder why their mothers train them on the same pattern?”

“Because the same thing is required. An attractive wife with a good share of versatility, grace and beauty, if she have dowry enough to attract a titled foreigner. If not, her husband may be lucky enough to make a fortune and she can shine abroad. Are we verging on irony? There are some better women than the butterflies of fashion. That girl who was here to-night ——”

She would risk that. He had not shown any decided preference for her that bordered on love, but he liked her and she had tastes that ministered to him. She would be true and steadfast.

“I like her better than any of the others. I couldn’t be harried about by a fashionable woman. I couldn’t take up philanthropy as some of these people do. I am not interested in my kind. I have no head for business

and shouldn't like it. Besides, there is plenty of money.'"
This was half question, half assertion.

"There is plenty of money." Her voice had a deep, curious cadence, as if she half regretted it.

"And I am not an extravagant fellow."

"Is there any line you would like?"

"Why, I am satisfied—except that—it might be the part of wisdom to marry;" and he pointed the sentence with a conventional laugh.

"Yes. I thought you would be in love half-a-dozen times. Girls are very pretty and attractive nowadays."

"I'm not quite silly," in a rather affronted tone. "Of them all I like Miss Carew best. She is pretty without the vanity of being beautiful. I never saw a girl with such a naïve kind of innocence, who cared so much for appreciation and so little for mere compliment. She is harmonious, like her own music. She is satisfied with her limitations. She doesn't want to go to college, she doesn't care to run around on missionary tours, she has no ambition to convert the world. She is a sweet, charming, domestic girl, by that I don't mean the kitchen would be her forte, but she could devote herself to making some one happy. And so with your consent *ma mere*, I think I shall address myself to business."

The tone had a curious effect upon Mrs. Henderson. The words, the prospect filled her with satisfaction, for she had come to care more for Millicent Carew than any one she had ever known, but that any man with youth and hope should be so little stirred on a subject that ought to rouse a man's enthusiasm, filled her with a sense of revolt. Was he incapable of love?

She had known one passionate adoring love and in those few months it seemed as if she had sat upon the very ramparts of heaven. How much had it been

worth ! People married from almost every motive, some were happy, some made themselves happy, and a great many were wretched. Perhaps the common-sense view was best.

Millicent had been so grateful for the pleasures showered upon her, the broad and delightful life opening before her, the kindness and admiration offered, that the honest respect really wore the guise of love, in those days when her ideal of love had not been high. But would any girl now take this spiritless semblance when she cared so little for money as Millicent Carew did ?

“ Well ! ” Charlton said impatiently.

She drew a long breath. “ I have seen no one I like better. I could give her a mother’s most cordial welcome.” Must she not make an appeal for the girl ?

“ Then that is settled. Good-night, *ma mere*. I must have the solace of a cigar.”

He went up to his “ den ” on the top floor. There was a wide couch, a Morris chair, a desk, a cabinet of odds and ends, but few of the articles supposed to be the delight of the masculine mind. He looked over the pipes and selected one, unlocked the desk and took out a curious old silver casket from which he filled it, put it back and relocked the desk, lighted the pipe and stretched himself out amid downy pillows, opened a book of poems and resigned himself to fantasies of the brain.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE GLADNESS OF YOUTH.

MILLICENT entered the room where the confused sounds made it seem as if every one was talking at the same time. Honor gave her a fond greeting and presented her two friends. Edward Sherburne came around to her side and flushed a little, thinking of the winter he had spent here, that after all could not be quite forgotten. It had not been really wasted as he was learning by degrees, though first in anger and next in shame he would fain have blotted it out entirely.

“I shall have some one on my side now,” he declared. “Milly, these young collegians are making my life a burthen with their knowledge and their bad puns. They are putting the old poets to shame by horrible misquotations. Range yourself on my side at once —

“‘A perfect woman nobly planned
To warn, to counsel and command.’”

“Now you make a bad application. At least I do not know how Miss Carew may like commanding, but I thought that was one of the things you despised in the new training,” declared Miss Losee.

At this there was a moment of general laughter. She glanced up with a gay air, and Sherburne colored in spite of an attempt at self-assurance.

Millicent looked from one to the other in confusion and a sort of sweet helplessness.

"Milly has not been trained on severe logical lines," declared Honor. "And though volunteers *do* distinguish themselves in the thick of the fight, there are times when knowledge and experience are necessary."

"Are you quoting, Cousin Honor?" asked Ned.

"Indeed I am not." Honor flushed and for an instant was irritated.

"But after all, remember so wise a man as your poet Terrence reflected that it was not superior knowledge but the cackling of geese that saved Rome."

"Which proves that everything has its uses."

"Do you consider geese a personal noun? We cannot quite make it a pronoun. Or an application?"

Miss North glanced up with a dignified simplicity of demeanor.

"You cannot make headway against three newly fledged sophomores," said Ned Beaumanoir. "Remember how wise we were in our early youth and how we obscured the very atmosphere with the vague cloudiness of words. Let us all agree with old-fashioned Dryden —

"Of all the tyrannies of humankind
The worst is that which persecutes the mind.'"

"Now Ned, that would have been most effective if you had said it in Latin," and Honor gave a light, teasing laugh.

"But English was good enough for Dryden and—for me;" and Ned made a profoundly ironical bow.

"Can't some one else shine in borrowed plumes by quoting? Agatha," turning to Miss Losee, "you must have something at your tongue's end."

"Anent wisdom?" laughingly. "It may be like Nebuchadnezzar's experience —

“ ‘As he ate the unwonted food,
It may be wholesome but it isn’t very good.’ ”

“ ‘What? Wisdom! I am amazed at you, Agatha, for such a heresy,’ ” cried Honor.

“ ‘I don’t see why we should be standing on the ground of high intellectual aims and purposes when we thought we had left them behind,’ ” declared Miss North. “ ‘People have begun to preach the necessity of brain restfulness, and isn’t this what vacation is granted for, instead of keeping up a fire of profound theories and unanswerable questions? Why we might as well return to college walls and Herbert Spencer on evolution ‘when matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite heterogeneity, during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.’ That is substantially correct. I realized that I would need the enlightenment in my senior year, and so conquered the formidable definition beforehand. There! I know you are all extinguished. And now let us do the silliest thing we can think of to rest our brains.’ ”

“ ‘Isn’t it a great wrench to your mind to bring it back so suddenly?’ ” asked Ned good-humoredly, with mirthful lines crossing his face.

“ ‘How did it all come about?’ ” asked Miss Losee.

“ ‘Why—’ ” Honor glanced from one to the other—
“ ‘it was Sherburne who began it.’ ”

“ ‘Then I ought to end it. Let us discuss the greatest folly of the day,’ ” he returned.

“ ‘Straining after wit when one has none and continually falling back on other people’s sparkles.’ ”

“ ‘But isn’t it a compliment to remember other people’s witticisms? They must have had a point to lodge in your mind.’ ”

“ ‘I am going to take Miss Carew off in a corner and

get acquainted with her. She looks as if we had been talking very bad Sanscrit."

Miss Losee drew Millicent's hand through her arm and led her down to a window-seat. Lyndell had nursed a honeysuckle at this particular spot which now ran up to the roof, making every story sweet with its bloom.

"I am afraid you will think us a wild set! A little of the West hangs about me, doubtless. But after nine months of study and confinement one bubbles over when the cork is taken out. And you can't imagine how we two have counted on this visit. Honor has such a way of interesting a friend in her family. I seem to know you all quite by heart."

Millicent glanced up with a faint smile. Her heart was still at the other house, making pictures of Charlton and his mother talking about—what? Would her eyes have been opened if she knew?

"It must be delightful to belong to a large family. My mother was an only child—I haven't a single cousin on that side. And papa's people are scattered about; he never kept up with them."

Miss Losee's eyes had been wandering to the group at the other end of the room. She had decided in her mind that Edward Sherburne was fond of his Cousin Millicent and would find his way over here, but Ned Beaumanior came instead.

Annie North was bright and sparkling and she was making big eyes at the heir of Sherburne. Of course it didn't amount to anything, there were three years of college life before them, and Agatha's father had said there was to be no begging off, that if she went at all she must remain the whole period. She wasn't thinking of lovers and marriage, but the fun and chaffing, and

Annie's laugh irritated her. It had such a rippling, beguiling sound. And this grave fellow ——

Ned Beaumanior began to show that he was not gravity all the way through. His soft dark eyes had gleams of fun in them, and Agatha Losee was soon roused into interest.

"You are not so faithless about the destinies of educated women as your cousin," she said.

"O, he talks for the sake of being contradicted. He loves argument, you know. He is a lawyer. And then," smilingly, "the sweet, domestic being who mended table-cloths with——what kind of darns were they, Milly?——" glancing at his cousin.

"Over and under," replied the girl seriously.

"And——stockings and oh almost everything! I wonder they didn't grow profane——they were slangy, because to every tear or wear in clothes they said——O, darn it!"

Miss Losee gave an undeniable giggle.

"You see everything has been cheapened so much, the processes of manufacturing are so rapid. And the old things after they have passed through two or three hands can be ground over and used again. We are more economical than our grandfathers after all."

"I am afraid that way of putting it is rather sophistical, and would increase wastefulness."

"Would you like to go back to that old time of spinning-wheels and tallow candles, and——let me think——sewing rags for carpets and scouring pewter plates and brass andirons and——

"'Teacup times of hood and hoop'?"

"No, I like a girl's college better," and she tossed up her head with a pretty coquettish air. "Those things

make charming pictures in novels when they are not too prosy, and in the sort of museums called somebody's Headquarters, generally Washington's. Think too, of scrubbing floors. There's an old, very old woman who sells candies and things in the town and who told us once about gathering rushes, and tying them tightly about the middle where you held them in your hand, trimming the ends, and scouring the floors until they looked like snow."

"Did she bewail the degeneration of the days?"

"Not a bit," laughed Miss Losee. "This was what she said—'An' to think them people hadn't wit enough to paint the floor when they could a jest wiped it up with a mop.'"

"Now that woman had lived to some purpose," said Cousin Ned, decisively.

"And one of the mysterious dispensations of Providence is the number of poor put in the world who want work to do, just at the time when you are cultivated up to some higher employment. There is a great deal of wisdom shown in the development of this round earth."

"Are you going to be a college professor, Miss Losee?"

He asked it with a charming gravity and a mirthful light in his eyes. Was it a covert sarcasm?

"Indeed I am not," was the emphatic answer. "Perhaps having been through that period you know there is no such absolute certainty and overwhelming wisdom as comes in one's first year at college. Three years from this you will find me weak and ignorant, and positively distressed at being asked for an opinion, even if I am on the honor list."

"You seem to understand it pretty well," Ned laughed genially.

"You see it is a good discipline to use the superabund-

ant self-esteem. We come out sensible all around women. We have definite ideas as to the becomingness of a hat and the sweep of a train of chiffon ruffles, and are able to criticise our dearest friends with high moral precision."

"My Cousin Sherburne ought to hear this," he returned much amused. "They have something very ridiculous over there. What are you laughing at?" raising his voice and turning a little.

They all came down to that end of the room and the merriment was general, though Millicent was silent and took no share in it. More than ever she felt she was not akin to this—was it meaningless chatter? She seemed in a vague dream, back at Mrs. Henderson's playing on the piano to two listeners. That was surely enough.

Mrs. Carew came in presently and charmed the group with her interest and affability. To-morrow was to be a gala day. When the exercises were over there was to be a family dinner at the Waldorf, and an evening at Mrs. Drayton's.

"Have you any idea how late it is?" she asked with a delightful air of authority. "Here are three girls who were on the rack of examinations yesterday and have traveled to-day, and who must be charming to-morrow."

"Which means that we are cordially invited to take our departure, Sherburne. We can't waste their time 'saying good night 'til it were morrow ——'"

"Hear! hear!" cried Honor, "Cousin Ned dropping into sentimental poetry."

"So our adieu must be sharp, short, and decisive," he continued. "Stick a pin in this point of delight lest it escape us, and have it ready to begin on to-morrow."

"As if the day would not be sufficient for itself!" exclaimed Honor saucily.

"Good-night, good-night."

Honor clasped her arms about her mother's neck with a tenderness that went to the elder's heart. "The child all for herself," she had said when Honor was born. She had not really wanted her to go away, but this was worth the months of separation.

"Mamma dear, it doesn't seem as if life would be long enough to love you," in a soft, caressing whisper.

"There will be all heaven, dear."

They trooped off up-stairs where good-nights were said again. The mother kissed her elder daughter and longed for some of Honor's effusiveness. What could rouse the quiet soul into ardent responsiveness?

"Now girls, don't stay awake to talk. There will be days and days," counseled the mother.

Millicent could not have talked had there been a dozen in the room. She was glad to be alone. The evening with its bright chatter had bored her. She began to take off her adornments with curious deliberation. The beautiful lace berthe had been an Easter gift from Mrs. Henderson who had said, "When you wear it I shall know it is out of regard for me. You have not the vanity of most girls." She wore it often when she was going there.

Why was she always so at rest there? She did almost as she liked at home. She went out with her mother and made calls, she went with her to the Children's Homes but she never knew what to say to little children, and suffering of any kind made her shiver with icy coldness.

"You were hardly born for a doctor's daughter," her father had once said.

But it was delightful when Mrs. Henderson had the carriage ordered up and declared they must go out for a little airing since Charlton was not in to entertain them. Sometimes they picked him up in the park, other times

they took Ruth, occasionally they were quite alone in the coupé. They were pleasant times interspersed with bits of foreign experiences. The elder woman had bitter moments, selfish moments, despairing moments, but she kept them from this innocent girl who was like a rosebud with its leaves folded.

Millicent dawdled a long while, she was fond of loitering. And after she was in bed her soul in some strange way seemed to be wandering about the other house and listening for both voices. What charm drew her thither?

She was always first, there, as she had been with grandmamma. It was a delight to her.

The day dawned peerlessly. The girls were all alive with interest. Miss North had seen something of the city once before, to Miss Losee it was all new. The two young men came to escort them, and they preferred to walk. What a grand pile the college was, and more and more to be added as time went on; with the beautiful grounds, the river dotted with every kind of craft hurrying to and fro, the wide streets, the cathedral sometime to be a glory.

Honor said it was a family circle. Mrs. Kenneth of course dared not venture, but Margaret and her husband and Miss Ensign, Princess and her Professor who certainly grew younger and fresher and stouter every year, Tessy and the two girls who were growing up into Sherburne prettiness and tallness, and all of the Draytons. Judge Beaumanoir had been unavoidably detained, though Bertram said he was glad he did not know it until the exercises were over.

They all considered Bertram's essay the finest of course, though they admitted frankly that he was not the handsomest of his class. And when the affair had ended there was a great time of congratulations and introductions.

Across the aisle Millicent caught sight of a face and a grave bow was bestowed upon her. Then right behind him was Mrs. Henderson's elegant figure and handsome, impressive face. She made an effort to go over, but the joyous crowd swept her along with it.

"I'll come to luncheon with you—yes, although I'm in for another banquet to-night," Bertram was saying and shaking hands, sometimes one, sometimes both hands.

"I hope your promising career won't be cut short by a fatal attack of indigestion," said Ned. "There are several useful rules to observe ——"

"O hang rules!" interrupted the boy in a gay tone. "I feel a premonition of old age in every bone of me, and if you think I can't stand one or two extra meals you must have a poor opinion of my capacity. And see here, Honor——" reaching over and grasping her arm.

It wasn't her arm at all, Annie North turned in surprise, so did Honor at that moment.

"O, I beg your pardon," and his face was scarlet. "Honor," in a low tone, "did you bring a friend with you, by name Miss North?"

"O yes, this is she," and the introduction followed.

"Why Miss North I've known your Cousin Jeffrey Ransome this last year. He is capital. He hasn't a relative here in the city, and it is hard on a fellow when every one else has a crowd around. Honor, *do* you think I might bring him to luncheon? Who is head of the forces?"

"Aunt Milly and the Professor and Princess. O yes, there's always room to crowd in one more. Here's Aunt Millicent."

Millicent Drayton was proud enough of her promising nephew; and assented cheerfully.

Bertram went to hunt up Ransome while the others made their way slowly out through the crowd. Everybody was so glad and joyous with eyes full of light, and lips that smiled with every word. Millicent did not feel glad even in this tumult of satisfaction. If she *could* have spoken to Mrs. Henderson !

Jeffrey Ransome was a nice cheerful looking young fellow with a bright eager voice. Of course he knew the Professor, and had met some of the family at his home where Princess kindly took in young students. So he was not quite a stranger. Miss North had written him two or three letters the earlier part of the year, then the correspondence had languished. He had still another year in the School of Mines.

"But it is so odd to meet you here," he said to Annie. "I've envied Bert many a time. He has such a host of splendid relatives. And that girl is awfully jolly looking, as if she was brimming over with fun."

"She is all that. We have had a splendid time, at least the last half of the term. I was homesick at first, and though I thought myself pretty well up, I found I really wasn't anywhere. I couldn't hold a candle, no not even a parlor match to Honor Carew. But she was splendidly generous and helped me over the rough places ; and now we are all in our second year. Going to college isn't exactly a joke."

"Well—for you girls who really do not have to do anything with your education"—studying the piquant face and mirthful eyes, "it isn't much beside a joke. I dare say you go for the fun of it."

"Papa was anxious to have me go."

"You see it is generally a man's life business. Marrying doesn't make any difference to him. And young Beaumanoir has a fine offer to go to South America already."

"But if a girl had the offer she couldn't go."

"Unless it was an offer of marriage."

They both laughed at that.

"Who is the tall fair girl by Mrs. Kenneth?"

"Miss Millicent Carew. She isn't a college girl, and she's not a bit like Honor. And that," nodding her head, "is our other chum, Miss Losee. We're both pulling straws for Mr. Edward Sherburne. He is the graduate's elder brother."

"I don't see how that can be! What a handsome fellow!" looking rather puzzled.

Sherburne was holding on to a strap and doing his best to talk to Miss Losee.

"They're very much mixed up in the way of cousinhood. But Mr. Edward Beaumanoir Sherburne took the name of a beautiful estate that Honor Carew's mother willed away to that family. He lives in Washington. I captured him last evening, and now you see Agatha Losee has her innings."

"Do you quarrel about him?"

"O, we leave that for the Washington girls. I dare say they do. But we know our limitations, and try to do our best with them while we have time."

There was a twinkle of mirth in her eyes.

"Then there is another cousin I am anxious to see, a young West Point cadet who is through with the 'plebe' stage. What an ugly word."

"O, Randolph Carew. Yes—Bert admires him very much."

They had overflowed the car. The few passengers left looked a little amazed at the sudden depletion.

"I do wonder if we are all here and have not lost anybody," exclaimed Lyndell Carew, looking over her flock.

It was quite a work of art to get them placed at the table. Ransome was delighted to find himself next to Honor Carew, who declared it was very funny that she and Miss North had not stumbled upon the fact before.

"You see I haven't occupied a very large share of her attention. Two years ago I visited my aunt, and since then we have kept up a very infrequent correspondence. Aunt begged me to write to her lest she should get homesick, but you see it is hard to know what to say to a girl."

"Girls find enough to say to each other."

"Well—so do boys—to each other;" laughingly.

"And to their fathers when they want money."

"I don't know about that. I haven't any father. And my mother is traveling all over Europe with a rich, nervous cousin, in search of health. Then I have one sister married. I don't like my brother-in-law, and he thinks I am a fool to spend my little patrimony on education. Now, Miss Carew, what fortune do you inherit from your mother that you can't spend?"

"Why—I don't suppose it is matrimony?"

"Exactly. How good you are at guessing."

"O, we spring all sorts of things upon each other, and make puns and all manner of ridiculous jests that we call wit."

"And write Latin verses?"

"Yes, and write Latin verses. Some of the girls write very fair English verses."

"I have heard that some one once wrote an essay on the advisability of improving natural knowledge."

"Isn't there some natural knowledge that can be improved?" Honor said with charming demureness.

They were not having all the fun at that end of the table. Some one had started Shakespearean quotations

and there was great fun exercising their memory. Then the young graduate was called upon for a speech, and after a little stage fright, collected his senses and did very well.

Edward Sherburne was between the two young lady guests who were each doing their best to prove attractive. He had his father's fondness for being ministered unto. But he did wonder a little what Honor found to be so merry over. She was not teasing either.

They wound up by toasts without the wine. Professor Kenneth answered the first one, and Sherburne made a delightful response to the second. Mr. Drayton was called on, and he showed that the years had not quenched his sense of humor. Dr. Carew, to his regret, had been unable to join them at luncheon, though he had been at the exercises.

Bertram carried off his brother in triumph. The rest dispersed after a little chat. Ned Beaumanoir had an engagement, so the Carew party had only one masculine member remaining, youthful Reese.

The girls were glad to get home and don cool white gowns while they planned a little. The next day nearly all the party were to take in Central Park and the museum. Then a brief visit from Aunt Tessy, who was to take both of her boys home with her.

"And not go to West Point?" cried Honor.

"Not this time, I think. There would be such a host of us. And papa is so anxious to see Bertram who has decided to go with Tessy and her husband to Nova Scotia. And if he should go to South America."

The little mother's eyes had a sigh in them that was not allowed to escape her lips.

"They do stray off," remarked Lyndell, gravely. "I suppose it is right to make new centres. Yet we do hate

to give up our own. A mother's love is quite as often jealous as heroic."

"But there are so many years nothing can take away," returned Tessy, with luminous eyes full of gratitude. "All the sweet babyhood, the eager, interesting childhood, and the enthusiastic plans for later life. I ought to be content with one son who will nearly always be at hand. Yet I would have said Bertram would be the home-boy instead of Sherburne. And Lawrence is really infatuated with his Uncle Underwood. I don't doubt but we will have a doctor in the family after all."

Before they had really settled matters Mr. Drayton came in, with a note from Millicent. They were all to take dinner at her house, coming directly from the park. Mr. Howe had been in and promised to join them and spend an hour or so in the evening. "Invite Ruth Ensign to join us and remain to dinner if she can be spared."

Lyndell smiled to herself. Millicent Drayton often saw possibilities, as people do who can take a view from every side, as only those can who are looking on. She never suggested anything, she was too delicately moulded in soul and brain to do that, but she did sometimes throw people in each other's way and let fate—or Providence do the rest. It would be an admirable match, Lyndell thought. Ruth would be able to follow out some of her plans, and have money enough presently to do it.

"It will be a red letter day, a sunshiny, long to be remembered, adorable day," cried Annie North pirouetting round.

"You don't suppose we will have to be staid and grave and subdued and repressed or depressed on account of this young clergyman, do you? And will we have to quote Watts and Cowper and Wesley, and oh girls, what

if he should suggest *Paradise Lost*? We shall have to confess that will be in our next year's reading."

"And not say we are more familiar with the *Rubàiyat*."

"What is he like, Milly? You must know him quite well," exclaimed Honor.

Millicent Carew flushed through the delicate skin.

"I think—I don't know him very well," in some confusion. "He is very pleasant."

"Milly never has decided opinions about people," declared Honor.

"Well, we will have to put up with him and make the best of him," cried Agatha gayly. "And I warn you I shall march around and view not the towers and bulwarks, but the weak spots and make big eyes at him. And when I open mine to their widest extent they can take in a great deal of space;" laughing with youthful vivacity. "O, Miss Carew, shall I poach on your manor? That would indeed be 'a dismal thing to do' as the oysters said to the carpenter."

Millicent's face went scarlet then.

"He is nothing to me," she replied quickly.

"It seems to me, Miss Agatha Losee, that you lay claim to most of the opposite sex. Decide upon one and leave the others for us."

"One, my dear girls, is most dangerous. In the multitude of counselors—read admirers, there is safety. With one there is a fatal tendency to get into corners and spoon."

"Milly," Honor said running into her room with a pretense of adjusting her hat, "are you interested in this young clergyman?"

"No, what foolishness," with a rather petulant air.

"And haven't you had any lover all winter?"

"I don't care for lovers," in a protesting tone.

“What a queer girl you are!”

Mrs. Kenneth insisted that Ruth should join the party. She took so few real pleasure excursions.

Honor said they were gathered from the four quarters of the globe. They came in detachments and formed quite a procession. Mrs. Drayton took the mothers in with her, and the young people arranged themselves if not quite in accordance with natural selection, still agreeably on the whole, as each of the carriages had two young men.

The park was at its most beautiful estate. There were noted points where they paused and took a short ramble. McGowan's Pass led them to refresh their memories of the historical episodes. They climbed the Redoubt and gained a magnificent view, while down below them lay the Harlem Meer, trees wide spreading in their most splendid greenery, shrubs that in their wildness indicated the aspect of a hundred years ago. Then there were the conservatories with all manner of foreign plants, the more tropical ones still enjoying their summer under glass.

It had been so long since Dell had given a day to pleasure of this sort that her enthusiastic enjoyment took her back to girlhood's time, made the more real by the group of gay young people. O did one ever grow old? Were these really sons and daughters or was she in some realm of imagination?

“If you mean to have any lunch and any time for pictures, you had better wend your way thither at once,” declared Mr. Drayton.

“Why one could have an outing here for a whole week,” said Annie North. “I really like it better than the pathless woods, where you get scratched by romantic briars ——”

“I take exception to that,” said Edward Sherburne, “Romantic briars ——”

“All things in the wild state are romantic. Briars send out long arms and enwrap you, and you can fancy yourself in the arms of a monster ——”

“Briareus—yes. And lions and tigers and wolves in their wild state. Miss North, you are not logical.”

“ ‘The first being so and so, the second,
The third and fourth deduced we see ;
And if there were no first or second,
No third or fourth would ever be.’ ”

How will that do ? ” with a saucy upward look.

“O, if you can make verses on the spur of the moment ——”

Ned Beaumanoir laughed and Annie catching his eye laughed also with mischievous significance. Sherburne turned red with a confused impression.

“Allow me to refer you to the reasoning of Faust. I’m not so sure he is logical after all, but those are his rhymes.”

“I shall have to look Faust over and see if you quote correctly. Masters in the art of persuasion are not always masters in the art of logic.”

“Young people, *do* you mean to come ? The carriages are waiting,” declared Mr. Drayton a little impatiently. “No doubt the luncheon is waiting also. I am glad I put it an hour later.”

“Is a carriage capable of waiting ? ” asked Honor drolly.

“An abstruse question. Bertram, it is your turn.”

“I am unromantically hungry.”

“What, after those banquets of yesterday ? I thought

the brain was more actively alive when the body was not overcharged with food."

"Put these disputatious people in one carriage or else leave them behind. No logic, no metaphysics," commanded Ned Beaumanoir.

The most notable quality of the conversation was its vivacity and laughter, which did not flag around the lunch tables. Mr. Howe had come and he chose a seat beside Ruth Ensign with no other motive than that he was better acquainted with her.

The galleries were another great source of enjoyment. Miss North elaborated her plan of a holiday. "To have some simple lodgings near by and come every day until one had seen it all. Why you would accumulate more real knowledge than some people do who go to Europe."

"There are people who never accumulate anything — knowledge, money or friends," said Miss Losee sententially.

They enjoyed the sitting round and discussing the pictures. It seemed quite impossible that time could pass so quickly.

"We shall have to come another day to inspect the rest of the treasures, and I must see a mummy," declared Miss Losee. "I always think of —

"The fragrance that steals from the winding sheet,
Where a mummy is half unrolled.'"

"Another romantic idea."

"Exploded," commented Ned with profound gravity.

CHAPTER X.

JUNE AND SUNSHINE.

THEY were a rather tired but very jolly crowd around the dinner-table, and the dessert was one of the drawn out pleasures. Afterwards some one suggested music.

“O let us enjoy the utter quiet and think over the delights,” said Miss North.

“The quiet being half-a-dozen voices talking at the same time,” laughed Sherburne. “What are the plans for to-morrow? What about West Point?”

“Randolph would prefer our coming next week,” said Lyndell. “I believe the examinations are not all through. And there is to be a hop. In that case we must remain all night.”

“A hop! O, delicious!” cried Agatha.

“I must shop some to-morrow. And really, we ought to start Friday evening,” declared Mrs. Beaumanoir.

“O dear!” cried the two girls.

“When Randolph graduates three years hence, then you will be young ladies and can go to the ball,” said Aunt Lyndell consolingly.

“That will be plenty of time,” said their mother. “I want to keep some right in my little girls awhile longer. Bertram, will you go with us?”

“O Bert!” Honor turned appealing eyes upon him. She had been enjoying him to the full.

“I ought to go—yes. But I must return next week,

for Princess and her husband start at the last of the week."

"And you will be in time for West Point?"

"That won't matter," declared Sherburne. "There'll be lots of young fellows only too glad to escort you around. It's their harvest. The remainder of the year is a dull time for them."

"Let him decide for himself, Sherburne," exclaimed Honor in an imperious tone.

"He isn't quite of age."

"You are not the head of the family."

"I'd like to go — yes, I think I will," returned Bertram after some consideration. "For if I go to South America — and brother Eric thinks it a fine opportunity."

"That will only be a year," subjoined Honor.

"We are to start about the middle of September. That will take me over next summer. And I may remain longer."

"Wherever you are I shall expect you to come and see me graduate; the first, and perhaps the only college girl in the family."

"If he doesn't, I'll come for both of us," promised Sherburne. "What a pity I can't be on the examining board," with a mischievous flash in his fine eyes.

"Yes — rather. Read up in Faust before that time. Women are studying law, and you might be appointed on some board on account of your good looks. Handsome men are particularly susceptible to flattery, and you needn't imagine you can hide your weak points."

He gave an irritating laugh. "If you mean that for sarcasm it goes rather wide of the mark."

"I mean it for truth, so it just hits."

"Sher," using the old name, "can't you let Honor

alone? Go and have a fight with that Miss Losee, I want to talk to Honor."

For suddenly he had developed a great liking for Cousin Honor. She somehow suggested Gertie Maurice in her brightness and quick turns. And Bertram claimed that his uncle's wife had been his first love.

What he wanted to talk about was letters.

"For you know I shall be awfully homesick, and wish to hear from everybody. Auntie Dell will write now and then, but she keeps so desperately busy. And you'll tell me all the ins and outs, and how you are doing and oh, I should like to hear about Miss Losee, and Randolph. He isn't worth much at letter writing outside of his own family circle."

"He has been having a rather hard time, no not hard exactly, but steady. He is very ambitious and wanted to stand high, not merely squeeze through."

"I shouldn't want to spend some of the best years of my life out on the frontier with the Indians," said Bertram reflectively. "And after all that knowledge, too. They have to learn almost everything."

"O, occasionally they get other positions. And what are you going to do, pray tell?" with a sudden amused laugh. "You will be among half savages. Did you ever think, Bert, how much of the world is waiting to be reclaimed, and civilized?"

"Yes, there is a good deal of work to do; work of all kinds. Honor, I almost wish you were a boy. You would make a splendid boy!"

"O don't wish that," merrily and with a lovely light of content in her eyes. "Did you ever know any one who was quite satisfied? I wouldn't change my father and mother for any one, nor my home. I don't care about being boundlessly rich, and—well, I think I like

myself about as well as anybody. There's self-complacency for you."

"You and Milly are so different."

"Yes. I sometimes think I ought to have been Randolph's twin. But I don't want to be any more grown up. And I suppose I am being fitted for what I have to do in this world."

"What are you two people talking about?" inquired Annie North. "You have a sort of happy expression as if you had found points of agreement. What was Cousin Ransome doing to-day? He would have enjoyed being with us."

"Yes, he would. But he did have an engagement, a real engagement;" with a frank smile. "He enjoyed himself so much at the luncheon and he thinks we are the jolliest crew. I hope somebody will take him up, for he isn't much in the habit of making friends."

Lyndell Carew said they must go. Ruth had not stayed to supper, and Millicent had talked to the young clergyman most of the evening. She had been quite reserved at first, listening to the work so near to his heart and of so much interest to Ruth Ensign. Then he had spoken of Mrs. Henderson.

"She has so many capabilities," he said. "One feels sorry to have them lying idle. She is not a happy woman, she has so few vital interests. Yet I think if something could once rouse her and help her to get rid of her dissatisfied self, she would be a splendid person. Does your mother know her well?"

"I do not think she does," the girl replied hesitatingly, yet with a feeling of something like disloyalty to her mother.

"She cares a great deal for you, indeed I think she almost envies your mother her daughter," with a gentle,

appreciative smile. "She has very strong feelings when they are roused, but—fashionable life will have a great deal to answer for. No, that isn't rightly stated. The soul that lives truly, honestly, earnestly, is not ruled by fashion, but makes the world subservient to it. Not that I have any desire to make life bare and bleak. I think God has given us all things to enjoy, and that it is our duty to enjoy and to call in our neighbors as Mrs. Drayton does. She makes religion beautiful. And Mrs. Kenneth. I should like to see Mrs. Henderson filling such a place. It would be wider and greater. She has so much to do with."

Millicent was glad to listen to this praise. Her mother thought Mrs. Henderson worldly and indifferent, rather hard inside, though the outside was so gracious.

"I can see just where she and Miss Ensign miss. Mrs. Kenneth has nearly all of the young girl's heart, and any other person must stand second. She would like to be first with some one in the way of friendship. That doesn't imply any thrusting aside of parents. She adores youth. I think a great many middle-aged women who have no daughters covet one. And I am sure you could have a good deal of influence over her."

"I—shouldn't know how to use it," Millicent said in a faint kind of voice, though there was a secret exultation in her heart.

"O if you really came to care for her you would find a hundred ways," returned the enthusiastic young man.

"I do care for her very much," Millicent's breath came with a quick gasp. She was not used to confessing her finer feelings.

"I can't help fancying that her son is something of a disappointment to her, as young men must be who have no aim in life. And she has a real longing for aims, for

some work that will be appreciated. We are very apt to do it first from that motive, later we come to the grander one—‘The love of Christ constraineth us.’ But we all creep before we can walk, and we do not expect a child to run a race. It *is* hard to begin at middle life, but many have done it. Some of the disciples were much older than Christ. O Miss Carew, pardon me; I ought not preach when all the young people are so full of enjoyment. I am keeping you from them.”

“Oh no.” Yet there was a little hurt feeling. Had any one tried to draw her into the other circle?

It did not occur to Millicent then that the others had not waited to be drawn, that they had come gladly of their own accord, that they were giving freely of their light-heartedness and merry humor.

“I think I am on the serious side of life,” she said after a little pause. She knew so little of real life that she could not see her mistake. She was not yet up to the level of her opportunity.

“There are many sides to true enjoyment, however,” he remarked gravely. He never felt as sure of Miss Carew as he did of Miss Ensign who seemed at once to go to the heart of the subject, and show enthusiasm in everything she undertook.

Mrs. Carew rose. “We shall be worse than the old woman,” she began merrily. “We may not get home that very same night, if we do not start. Come, young people, who mean to follow my lead.”

Agatha Losee had decided to go shopping with Mrs. Beaumanoir. She wanted to see the New York stores in their glory.

“That would be a month before Christmas,” said Mrs. Drayton.

“Why do we not take a tour of observation through

the city?" asked Sherburne. "There are bookstores, the beautiful bronzes and clocks and statuary at Tiffany's, china and bric-à-brac that you girls dote on. That will be more entertaining than shopping."

"O, you don't know. Shopping is a woman's delight. And in the between seasons you get the bargains so dear to a woman's heart. But why can't we do both?"

Miss Losee made a shrewd guess that the latter might include the young men.

"And there's the Museum of Natural History," suggested Bertram.

"O yes, we must have our hack at the tree of knowledge," laughed Annie North. "But to see everything would take all vacation, and leave nothing for the next time. I like anticipation."

"Anticipate how sleepy you will all be to-morrow morning," said the mentor of four girls.

And when they reached home they found Dr. Carew awaiting them, some letters and a very urgent invitation that Mr. Con Murray had penned on the centre table, sorry to find them out. They were all to dine with him and Mrs. Murray to-morrow night.

Millicent rather objected to joining the party the next morning, but Honor overruled. The day was full, and when she came home she found Mrs. Henderson's card, and experienced a pang of disappointment.

The evening was a very gay one. Mrs. Murray had grown quite matronly and was the mother of a fine boy who had filled Mr. Murray's heart with joy. Sherburne had slipped into a delightfully friendly niche with both, though at times his boyish folly brought a flush to his handsome face. But Gertrude was taking great pride in his career, and he felt he had won her truest esteem.

After that the party began to diminish. Bertram went

home with his mother and the two girls, but Sherburne decided to remain for the West Point excursion, entreated by two very attractive college girls, and liking the pleasure and amusement of disputing nearly every point with them.

The day dawned auspiciously. Randolph had begged them to come prepared to remain all night as there would be the hop. They took an early train, resolved to have as long a day as possible.

Millicent remembered the half invitation to Charlton Henderson. He had called when they were out. Indeed, there had been so much confusion all the time, so many things to do; it did really seem that her mother had kept her suspiciously busy. And when she said—to her—

“Mamma, there are so many of us to go to West Point, suppose I stay at home? I can go some other time.”

Her mother looked up in surprise.

“Why, Milly, you know Randolph made a point of you four girls coming. He is to be excused from duty just to escort us around. Then there will be Ned and Sherburne. I think I can matronize you all;” and Lyndell glanced smilingly at the grave girl. “You have no real objection?”

She wished for the moment she had courage enough to say—“I spoke to the Hendersons about going,” but she remembered she had only mentioned it to Charlton. And that would make the party larger, a thing she had just objected to.

“Why—no,” rather hesitatingly. “Only it doesn’t seem—they do very well without me. I am the odd one;” and a faint color wavered over her face.

“Milly,” said her mother seriously, “I half wish I

had sent you to boarding-school. You need a certain experience and self-reliance, and the—I think it is interest in others and the things they enjoy; breadth perhaps. You give up anything easily, you don't seem to mind effacing yourself, but that is not always the best thing one can do, even if it looks heroic."

"But mamma, I do not care for so many of the things girls enjoy. I wish I did love fun better;" and an expression flitted over her face very like earnestness, at that moment she would have said it was.

"I wish you and Honor could be shaken up together and some of the qualities mix. She ought to have a little of your steadiness, and a touch of her volatile temperament would improve you. She flies from flower to flower extracting sweets and diffuses them with a free hand."

"I don't seem to have so much to dispense;" slowly, as if tears were not far off.

"Then, my dear, give freely of what you have, and your store will increase. You remember Randolph said he was going out to camp somewhere for a few weeks, and then we shall be away for a little summering. It would seem strange for you not to go, and I think he would regret it."

"O, I will go, mamma, I only thought so many girls would be a great bother."

Millicent made an effort to speak cheerfully and quite as if she desired it. Her mother kissed her fondly.

"Now run away and get ready, and have a young girl's good time."

Before they were all in trim Sherburne's voice was heard in the hall. Agatha Losee was pinning her sailor hat so as to suggest a coquettish air, and she looked very chic in her blue serge with its straps of white cloth and blue stitchings.

"I'll run down," she cried, glancing around at the half completed toilettes. "Now don't make us lose a train, whatever else you do. Every hour is precious."

" 'Amang the train there is a swain
A lad I loe mysel' ——' "

sang Honor mischievously. "It must be Randolph."

"Why of course," subjoined Agatha. "I want to be first on the spot to congratulate him."

"But I've done it by letter."

Ned Beaumanoir was with Sherburne, and Reese Carew joined them in a moment.

"It's too bad papa can't go. There's an awful operation. But he is coming up to-night in time for the hop. I must tell mamma."

"Then Ned and I will have to be the fathers of the flock," said Sherburne. "Do we look grave and reverend as becomes the duty and privilege thrust upon us?"

"That sounds military, sword-like," laughed Agatha. "Couldn't you choose a more elegant word?"

"The unexpected delight and responsibility that has fallen to our share. The great honor and advantage ——"

"Of getting tickets and looking after one trunk in which we have all put our party gowns," interrupted the girl as he made a little halt. "Do you suppose a corporal's guard will be ordered down to the station to meet us? I wish we were going to stay in a tent, and have hardtack and drink coffee out of a tin mug."

"Upon my word you are heroic," with an accent of feigned surprise. "But you can camp out, you know, and tin cups are cheap and nonbreakable."

So they kept chaffing each other until Aunt Lyndell came down full of regrets at the doctor's forced defecation. "And he was counting so much on it, too."

"I suppose we are to patronize the party if you matronize it," exclaimed Sherburne with saucy humor. "I hope you are not going to divide the spoils unequally ——"

"You deserve to have only Reese," she laughed, and Sherburne thought Aunt Lyndell looked almost as much like a girl as the merry trio trooping down the stairs.

But she was very generous. The guests were given to the care and society of the young men ; Honor took Reese who was growing out of big boyhood rapidly, and she had Millicent.

The journey, if not very long, was delightful, for the morning was one of the finest in June without the summer heat. And as they steamed into the station they caught sight of an eager, rather wind-browned face among the crowd, which had come down from curiosity or to meet friends.

"My dear mother !" Randolph exclaimed, with a son's tenderness in his voice and clasp.

Honor looked amazed for a moment. Was this tall, soldierly, yes, good-looking young fellow her brother, that even in her wildest flights of fancy to the girls she had never characterized as laying much claim to manly beauty? How well and gracefully he moved or stood still, how proudly he carried his head and what a joyous smile he had !

When the introductions were over Randolph ordered the trunk sent up to the hotel.

"It isn't far to walk and I'm so hungry to see you all. I have your rooms engaged, and to think that I have all the rest of the day to devote to you ! I'm so sorry about father, but if he will come up to-night ——"

"O, he surely will," said Lyndell.

Somehow she felt very proud of her son. She was

proud of him again the day he graduated, but no one could have guessed this morning the stir and the change there would be in affairs then.

He hardly had a chance to inspect the girls until they were in the hotel parlor. Millicent was sweet and fair, and oh how oddly pretty Honor had grown ! These two guests would prove a decided attraction to-night, and his mother would rank with anybody.

"But it does seem as if I had been away from home three years instead of one. Well, next summer will make amends for it all. We must have the jolliest of times. We ought to get an island all to ourselves, and invite everybody we know, and have as good a time as you all did at Melchias."

"Then we would have to take Uncle Con," declared Honor, "and he insists he is growing old and lazy, and pretends to believe we are all frivolous. I think we are just as good and nice as the older girls. To be sure Cousin Princess is charming, and Pearl and Alice Osborne are married, and Ray ——"

"O, I had a letter from Uncle Archie only a few days ago. He is having a grand good time. They went to all the beautiful places in Scotland and had a week in London when they met a party of Americans going over on the continent and joined them. They will go down to Italy and France and Spain and spend quite a while in England afterwards. And he is enjoying it all so much. And now—what will you do? Are you too tired to ——"

"Tired !" cried girlish voices with an inflection of scorn that was near laughter.

"Then we might go out awhile before dinner. I have invited myself to dine with you."

"And we just want to see everything," declared Honor. "I've been the laughing stock at college be-

cause I had a brother here and knew so little about West Point."

"Why, I sent you a map —" began Randolph.

"Yes, but that was only in March. Since then I have aired my knowledge on every occasion. But maps are something like a friend's description of another friend, and when you come to see the real thing it is quite different."

"You had better shake out your party gowns," said the mother.

"I hope you have something pretty," and Randolph glanced around naïvely at the girls. "And that you all dance."

"Indeed we do," said Agatha. "They have dances even at a girls' college. I think myself that dancing is a feminine birthright."

"But you don't," cried Honor turning to her brother. "It was one of the things you hated."

Randolph's face was scarlet.

"Do you really? Reese went to dancing-school last winter and liked it. And you know mamma said it was part of a young gentleman's education in Virginia."

"When you have hopes of becoming a yearling you learn to dance," returned the young cadet sententiously.

"O Ran! What if you had failed? Were there many who did?"

"Yes, a good number. But I didn't come here to fail," laughing with a wholesome ring.

"Then—don't they get another chance?"

"Not often."

"O, how horribly mortifying it must be."

"Some give up of their own accord. The first year is pretty rough on a fellow."

Millicent and her mother had shaken out the gowns and

hung them in the wardrobe, and disposed of some of the smaller belongings in the drawers.

"Come, are you ready?" cried the young soldier impatiently. He was proud enough to marshal the little company out on the walks. It was not every yearling who could convoy such a fine-looking mother about and four stylish girls, to say nothing of his handsome Cousin Sherburne, and his bright young brother.

"It is really a magnificent place," declared Sherburne. "Everything is spick and span and rouses a fellow's ardor. Like Artemas Ward I'm quite ready 'to resign my relations to the service of my country.'"

Miss Losee laughed. "And such a fine young fellow! I don't wonder Honor is proud of him. He's twice too good to feed to the Indians."

"O, they don't all go out for wilderness or frontier food. There are other positions."

Randolph turned suddenly. "This is what I have come up from," he said gayly. "It is the chrysalis stage."

A tired, awkward squad passed by. The discouragement on their faces was pathetic, and the strained look of attention as the cadet corporals yelled at them went to the hearts of the visitors.

"Unpromising material," said Miss Losee.

"They are the newest of newcomers. Wait a year and you will be amazed. But you will see the yearlings' parade presently."

"You never looked like that!"

There was an indignant protest in Honor's voice.

"I wasn't quite so bad. I had been taking some training before. And if you are going to hate to be ordered about my advice is to stay out of West Point."

"I've come to West Point and I shall not be ordered

about either," declared Miss Losee. "I shall show you what independence means in a woman."

"A soldier is always chivalrous, Miss Losee," bowing.

"Didn't you hate to be howled at?"

"I came to learn. And I've learned several things that I shall never do," gravely.

The walks were full of excursionists of all kinds and degrees, and in a very few moments Lyndell felt that her party would not have more than a passing glance bestowed upon it. There were irreproachable dowagers, stylish young girls under the waving canopy of the daintiest of summer parasols, with attendant officers and cadets. Grave men and women searching perhaps for sons in the ranks that passed hither and thither and wondering at no recognition.

There was a most unmusical shrilling of the drum corps.

"The cadets are going to dinner," Randolph said.

The companies seemed to rise from every quarter. The cadet captains marched them along. Officers in gold lace, subalterns with chevrons and stripes, second and third-class men in dazzling whiteness, glittering belts and buttons, heads erect and steps with the precision of a machine passed them.

"It is quite magnificent!" remarked Ned Beaumanoir.

"And made out of those awkward squads."

"Wait until you see the parade at six. We should have time to visit the academy and the cadet barracks before luncheon if you would like."

They all signified their pleasure.

Just as they reached the academy, Colonel Burritt stepped out and smiled at the young cadet who stood very high in his good graces.

"I have my mother here," he began after he had saluted.

"And I shall be glad to meet her. I was wondering if your party had arrived," was the cordial answer.

"They are all here but my father who comes this evening," and Randolph, as master of ceremonies, made the introductions.

"Can't you all come over and meet Mrs. Burritt? She has been on the invalid list a few days, but is sufficiently improved to try the piazza and a hammock. Mrs. Carew, accept my escort and we will lead the party."

"O, while we were here we thought we would inspect the academy ——"

"Come back then. There are no classes to see."

"But the inquisition and the appliances of torture."

"Answer up, Carew. Have we tortured you very much?" asked the Colonel good-humoredly.

"I don't show signs of having been on the rack recently, do I?" laughing back at Edward Sherburne.

Indeed he did not with his wholesome animated face and figure that had gained immensely in symmetry.

"All these blooming girls are of some kin to you, I suppose," began the Colonel as he was escorting Mrs. Carew about. "You are to be envied."

"Only two are mine, though there is a much younger one at home. My second daughter has some college friends visiting her."

"You see we have had quite a Stanwood genealogy in the academy. Major Stanwood who was in the Civil war."

"Yes, my uncle. His wife was my father's sister."

"And his son Archer Stanwood. Soldiering seems to be a family inheritance," and the Colonel's tone suggested that it was a thing to be proud of.

"We were very loth to consent to our boy choosing the profession," and the mother's tone fell a little.

"Oh, but Mrs. Carew he was a soldier born, just as I suspect your husband was a born doctor. You'll never be ashamed of anything he will do unless he changes mightily. The first year is the hardest and he has come off with flying colors. I don't know of a young fellow who has been more thoroughly liked, and who has been so little set up by it. This isn't very good soil for the cultivation of personal vanity. And where does the very handsome young man come in?"

"He is the son of my cousin, Judge Beaumanior of Washington."

The Colonel nodded. "The girls will pull straws for him to-night even if he doesn't wear gold lace and all that. Now, young people, if you have seen enough of the inquisition, let us take up our march;" raising his voice a little.

"You are quite sure we shall not overwhelm Mrs. Burritt?"

"O no. Why, it will be quite a treat. We have no daughters and two sons still bachelors, one in Russia and one in Japan. We blossom out in girls here for three months in the summer, the rest of the year we live on remembrance and hope," with a genial laugh.

The call was delightful. The great event of the season was the first cadet hop. Randolph was trying to explain about cadet girls and officer girls, and that while yearlings were allowed to attend hops and have some indulgences of a social nature plebes were not.

"So this will really be your first entrance into gay society," said Miss North. "Honor, *we* are better treated."

"O, we make up for it afterwards."

Mrs. Burritt was very sorry their stay was to be so brief. There was so much to see at this season.

They were late at luncheon, and a little tired. Mrs. Carew said the girls must stay in and rest awhile, since by six they must be out to see the parade. But they chattered all the time though they stretched themselves out in the double bedded room and decided a week would not be long enough to do West Point.

They were out quite early after all. The throng was gathering for the parade. Bell-buttoned cavaliers were chatting with pretty girls in the daintiest of summer gowns and astonishing hats, and carried parasols not always over the girls, or twirled a fan to the imminent danger of breaking it. There were ripples of laughter like waves on the summer air, and the buzz of many voices. The long rows of seats were soon packed and reinforced by camp stools. Randolph had managed to seat his party and then brought up some compeers to introduce. The hop seemed the uppermost consideration, but everybody was full of smiles and gayety, and older men were rather envying the young cadet, not merely for a day off, but the pretty girls who seemed his charge. And other pretty girls watched the handsome civilian, nodding most graciously to young Carew.

The parade was quite magnificent to girls who had only seen companies out on special occasions. The long line of cadets, executing their different movements was a sight long to be remembered. The music too was inspiring.

"I feel like marching myself," declared Agatha Losee. "Would it be out of order?"

She cast appealing glances around, and then at Randolph.

"Why no ——" with boyish hesitancy and pleasure.

"Then let us go," Sherburne rose and bowed. "We shall see more of the marching."

The example was contagious. A young lieutenant asked the favor of Honor, and Miss North was carried off by some one else.

"Milly, come with me," entreated Reese.

She had declined one proffer, but this eager youthful appeal could not be denied.

"I suppose it is all right," said the mother when she was left alone with her son. "I need some training. I am not quite sure what my duties are ;" and she turned a half-questioning, half-smiling glance on him.

"O yes. Forbes will see that they do not get lost. And I'm glad to have you all to myself." His hand stole over hers. "It is hard often-times doing without a mother."

Six months ago she would have said—"It was your choice." Now there was a softened light in her eyes that was most beautiful to him.

"Mamma"—in an entreating boyish voice that she had not heard for years, and that set her heart all athrill, "have you quite forgiven me?"

"Yes," softly, under her breath.

"I couldn't have been happy in anything else. I am a year older now and have learned a good deal. Now I could make the sacrifice and stay at home, but all the same——"

"Oh," she gave a little cry. "Are you—dissatisfied?"

"No it isn't that. I should always have a sore spot in my heart, a longing I could not overcome. But I have learned that one hardly realizes all the sweetness of home love, of mother love until he goes away from it. You can't take quite the flavor along with you. And as one gets wiser, more experienced, better disciplined one feels that sacrifices are possible for those he loves. I find

some boys have really given up an ardent desire to come here, overpersuaded."

"And I shouldn't ask it now. So we have both learned a little wisdom."

Her voice was sweet and tremulous with emotion.

"And—grandpapa?"

"O, I think he gave up first of all. He reverences the profession of medicine. He believes a man ought to have as strong a call as to preach the Gospel, indeed it is often *all* the gospel some perishing souls ever get. And your father knew your heart was not in it. It was only I who could not give up, but children have some right to their own lives. I recognize that."

"Reese is going to make a fine fellow. He suggests father to me. I wonder who I am like?"

"Sometimes you are like me," confessed the mother.

"Then I must have a little of the Sherburne inheritance;" and Dell remarked the smile in his voice. "I should be glad to have your qualities, only I haven't that sort of attractiveness. Honor has it. How delightful she is! But I think in many little things of what will please you. The little things are often the hardest because they sometimes seem immaterial."

There was a crowd surging by them just then. A stout woman seemed to obscure the light. Under cover he bent over and kissed his mother.

CHAPTER XI.

WEST POINT.

“O,” said Lieutenant Forbes to Miss Losee, “you should see the graduation ball.”

“Once in four years ——” She sighed with a kind of delicious enchantment.

“Why no—every year,” in surprise.

“O, yes. How absurd! All the classes get pushed up every year, and the top ones take their honors and step down and out. What becomes of them? Are they like the smart children—never heard of again!”

“Many of them never are. They drop back into civilian life. There is nothing heroic for them to do.”

“You see—I was looking ahead. If I don’t quarrel with Honor Carew, she may ask me to come to the graduation ball when her brother makes his final bow.”

“He is a fine fellow. He won’t drop back into common life. He won his spurs before he had been here three months.”

“O, do tell me how?” eagerly. “I am half in love with him.”

“There’s no telling tales out of this school. He’s kept friends with his own class, and the class above him, and the professors. He is a fine draughtsman. Have you been to the academy, and did you see the drawings? We learn how to build bridges and ships as well as gabions and fascines and all that. But you won’t need that knowledge even if you marry an army man. Why can’t you come next summer?”

“ ‘Nobody asked me, sir, she said.’ I haven’t a single army friend who is to graduate.”

“But some one might send you an invitation. Why, Miss Carew could come up next year ——”

“This is my dance, I believe,” and the handsome civil young man with no military trappings carried off Miss Losee.

Lieutenant Forbes was down on Miss Carew’s card. After some search he found her whirling around with a happy cadet, who had made up his young mind to go to every hop of the season.

There were girls and girls, but few wall flowers. Such soft laughs, such low-toned chatting, such delicious music and merriment, and oh, such flirting, in spite of chaperons. Honor Carew was having the best of times and she wished the night could last till dawn. How tame the girls’ dances would be! And the languid evenings in the city when a young man walked through a dance in a bored fashion. Honor enjoyed her pleasures to the very finger-tips, but she longed to have her companion, whoever he was, enjoy them as well. It seemed to give her a greater latitude.

The lieutenant held out his hand. How pretty and sparkling she looked, her wavy hair shaking off shining lights with every motion.

“You are having a very good time! Miss Carew, we ought to be obliged for your delightful party. Are you not tired of dancing?” studying her face that flushed daintily, but did not stay red.

“Indeed, no. I am a cadet girl to-night,” with a soft ripple of mirth. “I was comparing notes with a young—a second class man, I think he said, but I can’t remember what every one has told me. I am through with my first college year, but we did not have any such merry-making as this.”

"This isn't all for the yearlings exactly. And presently companies of them will go out to camp. That shuts them from the gayety."

"Isn't it rather hard on them?"

"If you mean their deprivation from ladies' society, yes. Still there are hosts of visitors going out to camp. They find some opportunities for ——"

"O, don't waste another bar of that delightful music. I know what you were going to say, spooning. We girls give it a daintier name, flirting ——"

They were off in the whirling throng.

"Then you admit girls can share that reprehensible pastime;" in the first pause, glancing at the smiling eyes, his own alight at her frankness.

"Is it so reprehensible? Let us go to Nature, Mother Nature thousands of years old. The shrubs and flowers overhanging the streams, nod to their shadows in the water, the dimples and ripples run and dance together, the blossom and the bee have a cavorting time. Haven't you ever noticed how the flower tosses its head and sways about, and the bee pursues, bound to get the infinitesimal drop of honey? The flower is sweet again for the next comer."

"You are making out a very good case."

"And sly old Mother Nature lets it all go on. She knows the autumn will come—oh dear, one can't well talk and dance ——"

"So you are going to store up for the autumn?"

"I'm going to have all the pleasure I can put in until mid-afternoon to-morrow."

"And go away and forget?"

"Why, no. We shall talk it over at school. There are three of us to remember things and—people."

“Then your sister—that Madonna-looking girl *is* your sister?”

“O, thank you twenty times. We have an aunt who has a Madonna face. Milly was named for her and it really is a pleasure to her to have that comparison made. I must tell her.”

“She isn’t at college with you?”

“O, no. She is Miss Carew proper. I am the cadet,” with an arch dainty turn of the head.

The band clanged out the final notes. Some couples were so permeated with the music, they went on a few measures farther.

Ned Beaumanoir had been walking down the outside. Honor threw him a smile.

“Your father has come,” he said.

“O, Lieutenant Forbes, you must see papa,” she cried. “I can even lose one of these delightful dances for his sake, and I am quite sure some cadet will be breaking his heart over it.”

“Make a cross on your card for In Memoriam. Let me see—I must plan for a walk to-morrow. I don’t think I have had all the arguments on the propriety, the necessity and the advantages of flirting, as you call it. I should give it a softer name—harmless summer amusement.”

“Why, that is just what it is,” laughingly. “I thought it a waste of time to use so many words.”

There was quite a little circle about Dr. and Mrs. Carew. Millicent looked proud and tender. She had been drawn in the vortex of pleasure and was enjoying it. If one other person was here! Would *he* enjoy the gayety and the wild ringing music?

Miss Losee had been greeting her friend’s father, but two eager cadets were waiting to pounce upon her, so to

keep the peace she sailed away with one, leaving a promise to the other. Annie North was having a half argument with Sherburne, but a cadet captain led her off as the music struck up again.

"You promised me two or three dances, Honor," began Sherburne, in a half-injured tone.

"'When I said I would die a bachelor I did not think I should live 'til I were married,'" she quoted with heedless vivacity. "Shakespeare did not know about West Point. There are two cadets for every dance. One fellow writes his name over another."

"Well, this is mine if a dozen cadets waylay you."

"Can you make headway among so many? O, this does belong to Mr. Lane, and there he comes."

"No matter." Sherburne turned her quickly aside, caught step and fairly impelled her.

"Do you know you are flirting desperately?" he began in an austere tone.

"It is in the air. A summer disease like rose cold or hay fever. It runs its course and in the early fall will be lost in the contemplation of Latin quantities and Greek unities, of metaphysics and philosophy. Have you had a nice time?"

"Can't you be serious about anything?"

"Not to-night. The air and the music are riotous."

"I was going to say ——"

"Don't say it," she cried with petulant eagerness, but her face was dimpled and smiling. "If you didn't dance so perfectly, Sherburne, I should still go over to Mr. Lane. There he is pacing in a melancholy fashion. We had one delightful dance, and I'm sure I've thrown him over three times. This last sin is on your head."

"I'll take that and some others, too," half angrily.

"How lovely you are, Sherburne! When my pile gets

so high that it appals me I shall gently shift it to your broad shoulders. I didn't think you were so amiable."

He did not know why he should care for Honor's teasing or her dancing with everybody in such evident enjoyment. More than one person had noted the *riant* face and shining eyes as she went flashing hither and thither, warming many a cadet's heart by her merry, fascinating talk. She had quite ignored him. Was she won by brass buttons and a stripe down a trousers leg?

Lieutenant Forbes stood admiring the fine physique and friendly face of Dr. Carew, whom he had not seen hitherto. The son resembled him somewhat, but his eyes had the mother's light and glow in them, and he did not wonder now at the courage young Carew had manifested in two instances when hazing had been rampant. Then he turned to the girl with the Madonna face, and presently they were walking around, as she did not care to dance. She had not Miss Honor's girlishness, but she looked quite as young.

Dell quite forgot she was the mother of the flock as she listened to the interesting conversation in which the doctor was taking a part, concerning the young men of the country who were to be the leaders presently. And she was surprised at the long pause in the music that had just been flinging the Star Spangled Banner to the heated atmosphere, and the certain indication that the gayety was at an end.

Chaperons were hunting up their fair charges—many of whom were accepting arrangements for the morrow subject to certain after revisions. Honor made various subtle endeavors to set Sherburne adrift, but without avail, so then she boldly held counsel with two young fellows about walks to-morrow and points of interest, the library and the batteries and the shore road.

"But you never can go over it in one day, Miss Carew," said George Prescott, who was no mean rival in good looks to Edward Sherburne, although a contrast, except in figure, and in that he had the trained advantage. "Can't you stay?"

"I am afraid not. But I might come again. My brother has still three years in bonds."

"And I have only two;" with reluctance in the voice.

"I'm glad you like it. But you are all so enthusiastic. It is really delightful to see the spirit animating you. And it isn't an easy life either."

"Honor," interposed her cousin, "your mother is beckoning. They are all going."

They gave each other a cordial good-night. Then some one else stopped her. "Miss Losee had promised to go out rowing if the rest of the party would ——"

"You can't tell," exclaimed the young man interrupting with an air of authority, "until you know what uncle's plans are for to-morrow."

"We shall see," she replied gayly. "O, I think we will."

"I wish you'd let me answer for myself, Sherburne," Honor began with a touch of indignation. "I shall decide my own pleasures without reference to you."

"Or any one else!" in a tone of expostulation.

"I'm glad you are no nearer relation than a second cousin. Mamma said once the Sherburnes began by being self-willed and dogmatic."

"You have as much of the Sherburne blood as I," he flung out loftily.

"That is what makes me self-willed. But I don't thrust it on everybody as a virtue."

Agatha and Annie still had a group of admirers about

them putting in enough plans for a solid week. But they started to the hotel presently, Honor clasping Agatha's arm, and shaking off her somewhat sulky cousin.

"It has been just heavenly," declared Agatha with a thrilling sigh of satisfaction. "I don't know how I will ever get you repaid, Honor, unless I coax papa next year to take us off somewhere, and two girls together are not much fun. If I only had an uncle who was a professor here at West Point, I'd beg to come and spend next summer with him. O girls, isn't it a shame that we can't choose some of our relations after we are grown up and know what we would like."

They all laughed at that.

Dr. Carew said he would like to stay half an hour or so and continue a discussion, and Lyndell felt that it would be a full hour before the girls were settled. Randolph went off to the barracks, but was to join them the next morning. The others said good-night. The girls began to rehearse their conquests.

"And you have been really charming, Milly," declared Honor, whose fit of sharp temper had vanished. "Lieutenant Forbes admires your style very much. When you do come out of your shell you are lovely."

"Girls, girls, do you know it will be morning presently?" said the admonishing elder voice.

And morning it seemed, before, in all the affluence of healthy youth they had finished their first nap. They heard the reveille, the unusual sounds, and found the sun beaming in all his glory, as if he enjoyed it.

"If it *had* rained!" said Annie North.

But it was delightful, for about the middle of the forenoon it grew rather hazy with the sun behind thin clouds, though there were parasols with pink and blue

linings, ruffling and laces that made them a mound of waving clouds. There were so many places to visit. And this morning they had an escort of officers that was very flattering. There were the barracks with their rounded battlements, the village of tents, the encampment of the young cadets, the chapel, the great hills and bluffs, the magnificent old trees, the river winding in and out, fretting the shore in little eddies, the almost level strip of coast and the river shining and rippling along, studded with craft of various kinds.

There was troop parade, there were cadets in speckless uniform, officers with chevrons and bars and gold lace that glittered with every movement. There were military ceremonies and evolutions wonderful to the untrained eye.

George Prescott came to greet them. He was the retiring officer of the day, and certainly was resplendent in golden buttons, chevrons and crimson sash, and sword. The bands were playing gayly. Pretty girls were gathering from near and not very far, and cadets were hovering about them making plans for an unoccupied hour or two.

"You won't have to go until an evening train, will you? We can have a boat at two, the daisiest naphtha launch, or if rowing would suit you better ——"

"O, the rowing by all means. Up here it has a stately Roman sound. There should be galley slaves with shining black skins ——" Honor paused suddenly, her face scarlet.

"Well—we are pretty thoroughly tanned by the sun, and are slaves to beauty—and can row—and you shall imagine all the rest. Which shall it be?"

"O, there is papa and Colonel Throckmorton."

Honor darted off. Couldn't the day be lengthened

out by an evening train, for invitations had poured in upon them. And there was a cadet tea—"Do the cadets pour the tea and pass it around and wait upon you?"

The Colonel laughed down in the bright gipsy face with its lovely eager brown eyes.

"I believe they don't pour the tea. But they will be delighted to wait upon you and surfeit you with sweets. Whose is it?"

"My brother brought the invitation—at a Mrs. Day's, I believe."

"O, go by all means. Carew, you can surely add a few hours to your infrequent holiday. Zounds man! how do you manage to get along with so much work and writing, and operations, and look so fresh and sturdy? That's a fine son of yours and I don't wonder at it."

"The rowing party is safe enough?" Doctor Carew smiled cordially.

"Well, I should say—on such a day as this," and the Colonel lifted his brows.

Honor flew back joyously. "Yes, we can go and papa will stay. And Colonel Throckmorton thinks we ought to go to the tea. O dear!" with a sigh. "Why *are* the days so short?"

"June days always are short," said Prescott sententiously. "That's a humbug about their being the longest in the year. And now we must hustle. What's first?"

"Intellectually I suppose it is to do the library. When we get back to college we want to announce the tough reading the cadets take to fortify their minds and help them to fight the battles of their country," said Miss Losee with an air of profound respect.

"Paper battles!" with an ironical intonation.

“Boys, you would laugh if there was to be a war in the course of a few years.”

“With Canada or Germany?”

“Why, we might pick a quarrel with England.”

“Or the Shah of Persia. Or some little South American Republic.”

“No, it will be with Germany according to my thinking.”

“Then it will be a naval war largely.”

“O, bother about wars. Let us do the library—in Shakespearean parlance.”

Honor walked with the tall, fair, sunburned cadet, and they were very merry. Miss Losee had an admirer, Randolph's friend, and Sherburne who was not to be left in the lurch attached himself to Miss North. Millicent was calling on Mrs. Burritt with her mother and they were to be convoyed about by the Colonel.

After that they must see Kosciusko's garden, one of the beautiful show places, and the monument, and listen to some of the legends and bits of historical lore.

“After all the Rhine cannot be more romantic than our own Hudson,” said Honor. “From Albany down, nearly every spot is identified with some thrilling bit of history. Arnold covenanting to hand West Point over to the English; Mrs. Arnold and her baby waiting for her traitor husband—Andre going bravely to death——”

“You can go up to Lake Champlain and Rouse's Point,” added Prescott. “It's all stirring romance when you go back to the past. And there were heroes in those days. We have fallen upon commonplace.”

“Events bring out the heroes,” Honor replied enthusiastically. “But we do not want any real war for all that. I like this peaceful array of the armed host.”

"Do you know how late it is? We shall lose our luncheon," Randolph announced.

"Why didn't we bring it along and eat it in some shady nook?"

"Why, oh why? answers echo;" and Miss Losee gave a mirthful ripple. "That is not an artistic echo, I know."

"It's as good as the Scotchman's. They were to sing —

"Hail smiling morn
That tips the hills with gold,
At whose bright presence darkness flies away,"

and the echo was to be 'flies away, flies away ——' Think of the consternation of the musicians when the echo came out broadly— 'flees awa', flees awa'.' When taken to task the echoist said—'ah mon ye were in Scotland. How could ye have anything but a Scotch echo?'"

They all laughed. "So as a girl's echo yours was very good," appended Honor.

"But it wouldn't keep one from starving, and I am hollow all the way down," declared Reese.

Mamma was waiting for them and took the later arrangements very calmly. Dr. Carew had not been in yet.

"And you must all be in readiness to go to the cadet tea. Mrs. Day apologizes for the shortness of the invitation. She is very anxious to meet you, mamma, and she saw father a year or so ago. She had a friend in a hospital and she thinks he saved her life. The invitation is somewhere," and Randolph began to search the breast of his jacket. "You know people are generally just asked, unless it is some one quite grand."

The boy exhumed it at length and passed it over to his mother.

Nothing could induce the three girls to relinquish the river excursion. Reese and Ned Beaumanoir decided upon something else. Sherburne did not really want to go, yet as little was he willing to stay away. Some one *must* be the girls' escort, and Aunt Lyndell took it for granted that he would. It was clearly a duty.

The walk over to the river was delightful, partly through a wild and lovely glade where the foliage was fragrant with woody smells, and the coolness of a rivulet trickling along. They interspersed it with merry jests, the most notable quality being its vivacity, and the happy sunshine of youth.

Four cadets were the rowers. Prescott sat in the bow and faced his delighted crew, looking straight into Honor's eyes now and then, and calling up a bright color to her cheek. She did not know why she should flush, but after all she was having a good time and Prescott was extremely entertaining. He gave a queer little look when either of the others answered his comments, and she would smile back as if they said to each other — "this is between ourselves, you know."

"Honor, are you comfortable?" asked Sherburne. "Wouldn't you rather sit over here? I'll change seats with you."

"No." She put up her hand with decisive refusal. "I like it better here."

He bit his lip. Why should he care for Honor's snubs when these other girls were ready to scatter their sweetest flowers at his shrine! It didn't mean anything of course; they were full of fun and buoyancy, and he had sense enough to take it as the small coin one paid out on a summer vacation. They all bandied it about pretty freely with the exuberance of youth.

"O what a moonlight night would be here!" sighed

Miss Losee in a longing tone that all echoed in their hearts.

"I don't see why you are making such a short stay," began Prescott. "And next week will be moonlight. Yes — it's magnificent."

"And we shall be in camp at work on fortifications," said one of the cadets lugubriously.

"Are you not allowed to see any visitors?"

"O yes. They come out to camp and stare at you. But you are supposed to retire from the frivolities of society. No one gives cadet teas for you. There is no lingering on Flirtation Walk or under shady trees with the fairest of the fair," bowing with impressive significance.

"It doesn't speak well for the serious and practical side of your discipline and employments that there should be a Flirtation Walk," said Honor with an amusing touch of severity in her tone. "Who christened it?"

"Ask some of the old officers. The beginning of the reprehensible practice is lost in obscurity I think. But Miss Carew, you surely don't grudge us a few summer pleasures?"

"When you have to hibernate in the winter," said Miss Losee in an intensely sympathetic tone.

"Hibernate! Yes, that *is* good."

The young cadets laughed.

"We haven't much time to waste if you are going to the tea," and Sherburne looked at his watch.

"That's true enough. Boys, put in your best strokes."

They sent the boat skimming over the water. The west had been thinning from gray to suggestive lavenders and then bluish tints that grew opalescent, and suddenly through it all the sun shone vaguely but enough to light

the river banks with an exquisite glow, growing imperceptibly stronger and taking on the red gold hues of coming sunset.

“What a magnificent place the world is,” Honor exclaimed, her face alight with a grand sort of admiration.

Prescott was about to say “O, you mean the Point,” but the sweet seriousness of the girl’s tone checked him. Ah — if she were going to stay a week !

They soon reached their wharf and disembarked, showering abundant and delighted thanks on their oarsmen. There was no time to be lost. The band was discoursing sweet music, there was the usual glitter and brilliance, and white legged cadets hurrying to and fro, saluting officers and bowing to friends.

Mrs. Day was the happy possessor of a big piazza and a spacious lawn. Girls in the airiest of summer whiteness and laces and flowing ribbons flitted about, smiling and chatting.

“It’s a lawn party with the military aspect thrown in,” commented Annie North.

A gay young crowd indeed, laughing, chatting, chaffing too, making engagements for to-morrow or the next hop, and sometimes dropping into sentimental whispering. Cadets came and went, some of the fourth class men added grace and dignity. Half-a-dozen young girls assisted the hostess.

Honor went away with a good share of spoils and so many regrets that she felt very much elated. Dr. Carew dropped in to gather up his flock and see that none were loitering or getting left behind.

“And then we shall have to tear you away,” laughed Honor as he had fallen into pleasant chat with Mrs. Day. “Talking up to the last moment must be a Carew inheritance. We won’t lay that at the door of the Sher-

burnes," flashing a mischievous glance over her shoulder at her cousin.

"Sherburne just did nothing but stalk around and look gloomily handsome," she said to her mother afterwards. "He cannot bear any rival near the throne; and he will have to learn that he can't have everything."

They just caught their train in time.

"Ran, it is a shame to leave you here when we could have such splendid times at home," cried Honor with a great tremble in her voice.

"We will have it next summer," cheerily. "I am so glad you all came. O, good-bye."

The final kiss was his mother's. They had grown so dear in these last two days.

Half-a-dozen young fellows had come down to see them off, and the motherless ones envied Randolph Carew. With a manly sympathy bred of honor they talked among themselves, knowing he had no heart for gay comment, and would rather commune with his own thoughts. His friend Westerfield had his arm.

"Carew, you are a fellow to be envied all round," said he.

CHAPTER XII.

THE IDEALITY OF INEXPERIENCE.

“**R**EALLY,” began Dr. Carew as he opened the door with his latch-key, “I have had a rare holiday. Young people, I hope none of you have left your hearts behind! It was a fine sight, and I expect you are all filled with military ardor.”

The young men said good-night. The girls and Reese trooped into the spacious hall.

“Is it too late to have a little feast?” asked the doctor. “I am hungry as a bear when he crawls out in the spring.”

“And I. And I,” cried a chorus of voices.

Millicent lingered in the hall to look over the cards. Mrs. Henderson had called. Did she hope to find another name? Her mail lay on the top of her desk and she went straight to it. Invitations, a foreign letter from Ray Stanwood, a note from Mrs. Henderson.

“I do not suppose you have forgotten me, but I have missed you very much,” the note ran. “I wonder if your sister and her friends would be bored by coming to a luncheon with a dame of the past generation? I shall call to-morrow morning and try to persuade them, knowing thereby I shall have a glimpse of you.”

A tender light illumined the sweet eyes and irradiated the whole face. How long it seemed since she had seen her friend.

There was another dainty envelope enclosing a card.

This called a quick blush, but the tenderness did not leave the eyes. If anything it deepened.

Just Charlton Henderson's card. On the other side these words—"It has been an age since I have seen you. Have you thrown me over for newer friends? Will you be alone to-morrow at four? C. H."

For many moments she stood with the card in her hand not thinking in any consecutive manner, rather giving herself up to vague impressions, the most fervent and far reaching one, that Charlton Henderson wanted to see her. She did not ask why. It was not to play or sing or read and gratify him with soothing sounds to minister to him, which of course she would do gladly. It was some deeper personal longing that could only be satisfied at sight. She had never talked love affairs over with girls. Honor had been a mere mirth loving child before she went away. The freedom of the past few days, the merry gossip and speculation, the absolute license of comment and intentions laughingly expressed but not carried out, had somewhat shocked her. These gay girls were not pretending that it was love. Love to her was something august, to be approached reverently years hence. In her simplicity she wondered how a girl dared choose a man to spend her whole life with.

"Milly," Honor called. "Come down. We are going to have a little spread."

She went thoughtfully, reluctantly, from a curious sense of duty as if she had no right to stand at her desk and have Charlton in her mind when any one called her, if there was any other thing to do. She did not care for the little feast nor the gayety, even her father's cheerful voice and bits of teasing seemed an alien sound. She was tired of the laughter and jesting, the sweet

family freedoms when no one took offense at opinions that differed.

Lyndell looked at the blooming eager faces that showed no advance of midnight even after the long day. All but one.

"Milly, dear," she said with motherly tenderness, "you look pale and tired, and it *is* late. If you want to retire we will excuse you."

"Thank you." She came and kissed both her parents and said good-night to the others. A curious qualm of secrecy swept over her and she wanted to lock the door as she entered her room. No one ever did it in the house. She turned up the gas again and pored over the brief message. To-morrow! Why a hundred things might happen in the night. There had been cataclysms that had swept cities out of existence. There were—she shuddered, no she would not think of sudden endings, but to-morrow seemed so strangely uncertain to her. What her fear and desire was she did not ask herself.

When she heard steps coming up-stairs she thrust her card in the drawer and turned the light low in a kind of terror.

"No, don't disturb her," the motherly voice said. "She can't stand everything as you girls seem to."

"I could go off on another lark," was the merry answer. "Fun is inspiriting."

"I hope you will feel as gay in the morning."

Millicent did not turn up her light and moved about in a breathless fashion until she was ready for bed. Then she put the light out and stood in the dark, feeling the soft color flaming about her face. Softly she put her hand in the drawer and took up the card, slipping it under her pillow with a curious sensation as if half

ashamed. For a long while she lay sleepless, thinking of to-morrow.

They were rather late at breakfast. Millicent came in with Mrs. Henderson's note and took it to her mother. Last night she had almost forgotten it.

"Why that is very nice, yes. Girls, you must not go out this morning. Milly's friend who missed you last week is coming with a luncheon invitation. She is a very attractive woman, and I think it will give her pleasure. I pity those who have no daughters. Half of the sweetness of motherhood is gone."

"O are there sons?" Agatha Losee glanced up with a glint of humor in her eyes. "But sons I believe do not affect luncheons."

"There is one son, but I think I admire the mother more," returned Mrs. Carew.

"And we can't smuggle in your cousins?" queried Annie North daringly.

Mrs. Carew laughed. "O you spoiled girls!" she ejaculated. "You cannot think to go through vacations with half-a-dozen cadets drinking in every foolish word you utter. Sherburne goes home to-night. Ned thinks he has been very dissipated and must reform. But the city is left and there are rare things still to be seen. You must try to exist."

Agatha came and leaned over the back of the chair, put her arms about Dell's neck.

"We should exist with you alone to plan for us. Why are not all the mothers in the world like you?" she whispered.

"Some are better."

"I can't believe that."

Afterwards the girls counted up their spoils as well as the graces and virtues of their admirers and the amusing

incidents. Mrs. Henderson came and made herself quite charming to them, managing several little asides with Millicent whose subtle consciousness responded to the undercurrent of satisfaction.

They would come the next day. After that a little drive. She would keep them as long as she could.

"She is curiously interesting and an extremely handsome woman," declared Agatha. "When she talks you feel as if you were listening to a story. And to think of having really lived in Paris and Rome and Florence and Vienna and Berlin, and I dare say had hosts of admirers. I wonder what her husband was like?"

"He did not live many years," Millicent responded quietly. "And at the last he was paralyzed. She was very devoted to him."

"And had her reward," sententiously.

"She did not do it for the reward," returned Millicent with a sense of affront.

"I suppose her house is beautiful?"

"It is a hired furnished house of other people's choosing and collecting. Most of her treasures are stored until they have a house of their own."

"The son will marry, no doubt. I hope we will have a sight at him."

Millicent's heart seemed suddenly to stop beating as if a cold clutch had seized it.

Honor had not been paying much attention.

"There is Bronx Park and the old Lorillard house with its eerie legend. We might go up there this afternoon," she exclaimed. "Ned thinks we ought to take the sail up to Albany. We didn't see much of the river, you know. And there is the Jersey shore and Long Branch."

"Honor Carew, you do think up the loveliest things! It is a liberal education to know you. If that isn't original it's applicable."

Millicent's heart beat warmly again. If they *would* all go out.

Dr. Carew thought they could. He would order around the big carriage.

"Couldn't I go?" pleaded Reese. "I know all the queer places and beautiful trees."

"You can go in my place," announced Millicent. "I do not care for the drive."

"How good you are." He came around and kissed her, and a quick flush mounted to her forehead.

Sherburne dropped in to lunch, and insisted that he should be of the party.

"Milly," her mother said a little later, "you must take a good rest this afternoon. You look pale. I shall be away—there are all the arrangements to make for the Little Mothers' Outing."

So presently they were all out, as Florence had gone to Aunt Millicent's. She took up her note again and read it with a quick rush of feeling that made her heart beat wildly. A speculative girl might have studied her feelings and questioned, she was simply glad that he longed to see her. She wondered with happy eagerness which gown he would like best. There was the pale blue with all its fluffiness. Honor had said, "Don't wear blue when you are pale, it takes all the spirit out of you." Was she pale now?

She studied herself in the glass. There had been many pretty graceful compliments paid her through the winter, but she had none of the vanity that makes the coquette. She could admire beauty without envying it,

and the possession of it had never been held up as the most attractive thing.

There was a little shade under her eyes that somehow lent them depth. She was very fair, she had not braved much sun or wind while at the Point. A pretty shamefacedness as she viewed herself lent a delicate rosiness to the softly rounded cheek and deepened down to her chin, giving it a delicious outline against the white neck. There was something intangible that she could not explain, that sped through every pulse with a gentle confusion.

She put on the blue gown and did not like it. Mr. Henderson admired white for women, old or young. Mrs. Henderson had white cashmere house gowns, with velvet trimmings of various kinds, and she looked like a queen in them.

Millicent came back to a diaphonous white gown. Her arms which were beautifully shaped showed through the dainty material, her hands were slim and white. She was quite pleased with her inventory of herself. There was still half an hour—it had been days since she had practised the music they both liked. No she would not go down-stairs as if she were waiting to receive him. She took up her needlework. She could always lose herself in that and the music. She liked so to draw the soft silks through her fingers, to see the leaves and flowers grow under her touch. She liked painting flowers, but it was messy work to this.

How the moments dragged along! It seemed a full hour when the clock struck four. She kept listening breathlessly. Five minutes. Ten minutes. What if he should not come at all!

She experienced the sudden darkness and sense of losing her hold on everything that one does in fainting,

only hers was mental. If he did not come when by accident all things were so propitious! She was so confused she did not hear the light ring of the bell and started when Mary stood in the open doorway.

"Mr. Henderson is down-stairs, Miss Milly. He asked for you."

"Yes," nodding. She run her needle carefully through her work and folded it with precision. She did not look in the glass again, but slowly crossed the room.

"O," she cried softly, as he took both hands in his.

"It seems an age since I saw you. Millicent, you are growing beautiful."

She was glad to be even pretty to him. He was not much given to remarking on personal charms. There was something in his eyes to-day, a softened look, a far-away expression as if he was lost in thoughts of her.

"I had not thought to miss you so much. I am queer, perhaps. Some things seem to penetrate my being, music, now and then a painting. Most women are like the colors of a kaleidoscope to me, they come and go, you talk society nothings to them, you dance and join them at the play or the opera. Their going out leaves no vacancy in your life. I've sometimes wished I could take hold of things with the zest of young fellows."

There was a wistfulness of expression that appealed to her, and yet she was strangely troubled.

"The house has not been the same place. Mother has missed you, too. And I have been looking at life without you—Millicent, dear, I cannot stand it. There have been three days of torture."

Her face was scarlet, and then turned to snowy whiteness as if she would faint.

"I—I was at fault. You had spoken of going——"

Her long fringed lids quivered, the curves of her

sweet mouth seemed to be tossed about like tiny wind-blown waves. "O," with a sudden passion, clasping her hands. "I can't make plans come about like other girls. Honor takes the lead. All the relatives have been here, and her friends, and every one agreed upon pleasures. There was no time. I did try to come. Are you very much hurt—angry?"

The pleading face was a revelation and stirred the languid blood that was circling through his heart. This girl could love him, did love him, perhaps. And such a kind of love would be a new sensation. All the springs of hopeful life had withered slowly away until there were only dry stalks. Could they be revived? She was not one to consider money, the first desire of so many.

"I felt a little hurt—yes. And I think mother would have liked the trip to West Point. But we remembered that it was a family party. We three will go some time, and that will make amends. And how is your brother?"

"O, he is curiously changed. They make gentlemen as well as soldiers at West Point. He is tall and fine looking, with eyes a good deal like mamma, and the rest of him belongs to papa. Next summer he will come home."

"And your sister's friends?"

"They are—I don't know why, but I don't get on very well with girls. I sometimes feel as if I were too old. And I can't get interested in the missions and homes and the crowds of children needing something done for them. It is selfish, I know."

He sometimes felt as if he had lived a hundred years, or in previous lives. He remarked yesterday some fine lines about his eyes. But to associate age with Miss Carew in this almost infantile bloom! He smiled at that.

She smiled too, not from any real comprehension, but as if she was glad to have it born of his thought, whatever that might be.

"That is a point of likeness between us." They were both standing up and he took her hand again. "I couldn't do anything in the charitable line but give money. Doesn't Miss Ensign sometimes amaze you with all her plans and schemes? She ought to be a clergyman's wife. Mr. Howe's mother has a sort of missionary scheme to throw them together."

"I like him very much," she said, simply, thinking of the evening at Aunt Milly's when he talked to her; and several times she had entertained him while her mother was engaged.

"Better than you like me?" glancing intently in her eyes.

Was it jealousy that stirred Charlton Henderson? Curiously unsusceptible, he was penetrated by a spasm of ardor, a desire for pursuit if it did not become too wearing, a longing for possession.

Millicent's face was drenched in scarlet and every feature seemed quivering. He felt the throb in the hand he held. Drawing her to the divan, he gently impelled her to a seat beside him, and in a rush of girlish shame, she hid her face.

"I like you very much," he began, in a soft, bewildering, yet comforting tone. "I want you to love me better than any one in the wide world. I shall try to make you. I have been learning the last few days how much I should miss you if you went out of my life. You are like a flower set in it, like the melody that repeats itself at intervals all along the composition. Dear ——"

He could not raise the hidden face without force. Her soul had melted in sudden worship, and she was like one kneeling at a shrine.

“We have known each other long enough to dare confessions,” he said, in a tone that penetrated every pulse with a strange sweetness. “Will you love me, dear, and shed your golden light over my life?”

“O,” with a long, long sigh. “Could I do that? I feel so strange, so helpless, so amazed that you should really love me, that you should want me.”

“I do believe I have loved you a long while. I could spend all my life listening to your playing, being with you, caressing you,” and he touched the soft cheek with fingers quite as soft. “You will come into my life—let me hear you say so.”

It was such a delight to be wanted, and he had no one else but his mother. She felt in some vague mysterious way that his mother did not enter into the inmost recesses of his life; the knowledge that to every man his wife is the dearest. His wife! Millicent shrank suddenly with the impulse of flight. It was not simply the struggle of surrender, it had in it a doubt of that unknown quality, love.

“Millicent!” The tone had a slight command in it.

“O, let me think,” she panted. “I have not—I do not know—I have had no lovers ——”

He liked her none the worse for her naïve confession, but he laughed softly and drew her to him in a fervent clasp.

“Every man likes the first sweetness.” At that moment there came back to him a bitter memory that he fancied buried fathoms deep. But had he not begun life over again? Men and women were trying on loves every day and pulling them off like a discarded garment. This girl was not of that kind.

“Do you want to dream over it and take counsel with your own sweet soul? Let the confession rest there for

the present." He had a misgiving there would be an influence against him, and he wanted to rivet his own chain so that no other hand might break it and cast it aside.

"You must think of me only, as I shall think of you."

"I shall think of you." There was a delicious tremble in her voice, a lovely color wavering over her face, sometimes creeping up her brow and playing about the roots of her hair. Her sweetness and innocence moved him immeasurably. An influence stronger than he had ever known seemed to uplift him.

"You know so little about love," and he smiled down into the answering eyes. Why it would be an exquisite interest to teach her. Life was vapid except in dreams — would not this reality rouse him!

"But I *can* love," rather proudly, in a self-assertive way, "only — I can't even like every one. I suppose I am different from many girls. O, are you quite sure I shall suit you?" and her eyes questioned him with a troubled light.

"I have seen no one else who appealed to me in the sense that you do. Your playing is divine. I could listen to it forever. Your reading soothes every pulse of my body and steeps my soul in the most delicious happiness. I ought to know," and a satiric smile seemed to touch every feature and give a hardness to his eyes. "I have had girls enough thrown at me this winter."

She blushed with a sense of shame for the other girls, and delight for herself. To love very few people appeared to her a virtue, a kind of pride in one's own character. Her romances were of the isolated sort.

"Millicent." He kissed her softly on the brow and it sent a thrill through her being. Then their lips met and he drained the sweetness of her soul. Was it a second, or moments, or a whole new life?

The hall door opened. Florence had come home with her mother whose last call had been upon Mrs. Drayton. The eager girlish voice was in the midst of some description. They passed on up-stairs.

"I must go," he said under his breath. "My love, this is our secret for the present." He had a fondness for hidden knowledge and sweetness. "Presently I will explain. Trust me to do what is right."

"O, I trust you," in protest as if he had doubted it. "And to-morrow — I shall see you again."

He thought a moment. "No, not before all those girls. I couldn't be polite to them even with you at hand, and wishing to have you alone. Can you not make some excuse and stay? Mother will plan it."

Then he went out softly and there was no one in the hall so he opened and shut the door noiselessly. Millicent sat for a few moments unable to stir. This knowledge of personal love had come so suddenly upon her, yet it seemed now that it had been there all the time. Girls had been thrown at him. Mothers had manœuvred, for a young man with no bad habits and a fortune would be a prize for any one. She had not been a great social success. Dr. Carew's daughter had been her passport, and she had taken the prize without any trying. Was she quite certain of that? Mrs. Henderson had made a pet of her, but other girls had paid court to that lady. Ruth Ensign had the informal *entrée* of the house as well as herself, but she couldn't imagine Charlton interested in the things that were so much to Ruth. There was a satisfying elation throbbing warmly at her heart.

And yet sweet as it was her love seemed a strange thing to her. Had she loved him all along in this pleasure of ministering to him of the few rich gifts she possessed?

“Millicent —— Why where is Milly?” It was Florence’s girlish voice with an accent of surprise.

She rose slowly, but as she reached the hall the child continued — “No, mamma, she is not in her room. Perhaps she has gone out.”

“I have been down-stairs, Florence.” Her voice sounded strange to herself.

“O! and the girls have not come home yet?”

“No.”

“The house seemed so mysteriously still. Hope and I have been reading ghost stories —— ”

“How could Aunt Milly allow you!”

“They were not frightful ones, and they all came out as — well real humbugs, not ghosts at all, but from natural causes. And Milly in your white gown coming so slowly up the stairs you might be a ghost. Let me kiss you and see.”

She hated to have her lover’s sweetness kissed off her lips. She had grown selfish already.

“Did you have a nice rest, Millicent?” asked her mother in a solicitous tone.

“O yes.”

“And no one come to disturb you?”

Millicent tried to affect an indifferent tone. But before she could answer Florence had thought of something else, and then the hall door opened again letting in a bevy of girls talking and laughing, and trooping up the stairs.

“Auntie Dell, are you there?” cried Sherburne. “Come and say good-bye, and where is Milly?”

“And I too!” Florence sprang and they all met half-way on the broad staircase.

“O, Sherburne, you will stay and dine with us? You will have time to catch your train.”

“I have something else to do before I start. Thank

you for all the pleasant times, Aunt Lyndell," and he kissed her. "Good-bye, Flo and Milly." Then he just bowed to Honor. Mary had lighted the hall gas, and the mother could see Honor's scarlet angry face. In the hall there were rather gay farewells to the guests, and Sherburne was gone.

Millicent stole away to her room glad now that no one would mind her. Dell put her hand on Honor's own and let the other girls pass. Florence ran down-stairs to Reese.

"Honor," said her mother, "you and Sherburne have been quarreling."

Honor's eyes sparkled and her lips set themselves in arbitrary lines.

"It is not like you, dear, to resent a little teasing. Sherburne doesn't mean half he says about college girls. And you are sometimes very sharp. If you give, you ought to take. I hope you have not really offended him?"

"Why of course I have." She gave a strained little laugh. "But he will get over it. He is a very volatile young man, and his self-love is wounded if there is one Mordecai at the gate who doesn't fall down and worship him!"

"But I do not want another Sherburne feud," said Lyndell with a smile that had a touch of reproach as well as regret. "And he is developing so finely. Aunt Tessy takes such comfort in him. We are all so united for such a large family."

"O mamma, don't take my nonsense to heart." Honor clasped her arms around her mother's neck and kissed her fervently. "We need a little spice to keep us from being sentimental." Then she ran away.

But she wished in her secret heart she had not said quite *that* to her cousin. He had been teasing her, ad-

vising her to take on more gravity in her next college year. Her open preference for young cadets had stung him a little. And occasionally he aired the old-fashioned notions of marriage in a manner that she resented. His mother was to him an ideal wife. He would learn some day that it was the rare wisdom with which she was endowed and not altogether the domestic virtues.

"Why do you worry at me and about me?" she asked. They had strayed into a by-path and were quite alone. "I am not counting on marriage. Women can find plenty to interest themselves nowadays, and they are no longer terrified at the thought of being an old maid. Some of the most disagreeable people I ever met were old married women who considered themselves informed of all wisdom and were quite sure it would perish with them."

He had taken her to task for disparaging marriage.

"O," she cried with a touch of scorn, "Thackeray's description would suit you—'A humble, smiling, child-loving tea-making being.' There are a few of them left in the world. You had better secure one before they all vanish."

"O, you need not worry about me," in a rapid, supercilious utterance, a frown settling between his brows. "I am quite capable of choosing the kind of woman I want."

"What a relief to know that," with an insistent gayety that had a laugh near it.

He was too angry to reply and mentally cudgeled himself for not having some sharply bitter retort.

"After all," she began in an amused tone, "you men are very queer and unreasonable. Why do you drift naturally or steer purposely to the gay, volatile, laughing, flirting girls with eyes full of mischief and not a serious

thought in their brains, and leave the sweet, sensible, proper and amiable ones behind? Think how the butterflies attracted every one at West Point, even to some of the grave old instructors. Why Milly was almost a wall flower, only Ned Beaumanoir was devoted to her. And the rest of us had admirers half-a-dozen deep."

He half wished he had been devoted to Millicent. Why should he swell the train of this provoking, irritating, heartless girl!

"O Sherburne, here is a splendid idea; and I won't charge as much as a box of sweets for it. Why don't you fall in love with Milly? We're not own cousins, you know. She would make you a charming, dutiful wife, and that would give back a share in Sherburne House and everything would be serene and delightful. Consider it."

He looked at her an instant. His face was white with indignation.

"I believe Sherburne House was your mother's gift. She never fancied she would have a child who would be likely to grudge it."

They came out to the end of the path and Agatha Losee cried, "O, here are the runaways in the midst of a heated argument —

" ' Children, you should never let
Your angry passions rise,
Your tempers should as placid be
As summer evening skies.' "

Altered slightly to suit the occasion."

"But it doesn't suit. It is not summer evening," said Sherburne recovering himself first.

"That is poetic license. Poetry may lend a glamour to facts, but I never heard of hard facts improving poetry

even on the tombstone. The carriage waits, knights and ladies."

They did not exchange another word, not even good-bye. Honor went to her room, rearranged her hair, put on a dinner gown, chatting with the girls in a light-hearted fashion. Of course Cousin Edward couldn't think for a moment that she truly meant they would be glad to have any right in Sherburne House again. Yet there had really been a Sherburne feud when mamma as a little girl went to her father's home.

"But he *is* so provoking," she thought, "imagining he knows so much about girls who are not pretending to be women, and just care for a good time in the intermediate stage. Still, I wish I had not said that, and I do hope Milly will find a nice lover and marry. He wouldn't suit her at all."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN BEWILDERMENT.

MRS. HENDERSON'S luncheon was charming and most attractive. The rooms were like a garden for flowers, and none with a fragrance too overpowering. She had not had the draperies entirely removed but in some instances delicate summer ones were substituted, for she hated the bareness of uncurtained windows. So the rooms wore a dainty, homelike aspect.

She had invited three young ladies beside, and the party fraternized most agreeably. She brought out the fascinating side of her character, she was young and interested in their gayety and lightness, listening to the West Point episode with a sense of amusement.

Afterwards they went up to her room, and she took out of the safe curiously built in the wall, rare treasures and gems she had collected in her journeyings about.

"It sets one almost wild with envy," Agatha exclaimed afterwards. "I suppose they will be donated to the lucky daughter-in-law. Honor, do you know Mr. Henderson?"

"I've never seen him," was the answer.

"O, he's been in society most of the winter," said Miss Mains, "and is considered quite a catch. But he's not a regular lady's man."

"An old bachelor?" laughed Miss North.

"No. A young man. Handsome, too, a splendid dancer, and up in attractive society ways. Girls have

been pulling caps for him," and even this one, as she gave a bright ripple of merriment could recall some unsuccessful attempts she would not confess to her dearest friend. "However, there is the danger of the summer girl who is more fascinating than the winter girl."

"But I suppose his mother keeps a sharp eye on him," remarked Agatha Losee.

"No, she doesn't. He is altogether a free agent. And a splendid catch. He must be impervious to the blandishments or he would have been caught."

The girls had huddled together and talked in the lowest of tones, but Mrs. Henderson had gone downstairs, judging they would like a little gossip to themselves. She had deemed it wisdom that Charlton should absent himself, though she guessed at Millicent's disappointment by the expectant air that characterized her for the first ten minutes.

She had been generous with her son, though she had preferred Millicent for her quiet home-loving nature, and the power her playing had over Charlton.

When she returned they were discussing the dearest wish of every young girl—a journey abroad. Miss Mains was to go early in July and spend a year.

"I may go after I graduate," said Agatha. "Papa wouldn't hear to such a thing before. Three long years!" and she sighed in half regret.

Mrs. Henderson helped them to discuss places and people, out of the way nooks and art galleries. Millicent, she noted, was a little absent, indeed the girl was in a curious alternation of half fear and amazement. What if he had been merely amusing himself with her credulity? And now she remembered that he had not asked her to marry him. Her cheek flushed, thinking of the secret between them. And if he was so hard to win as this

pretty coquettish Miss Mains thought—had she really won him without any effort?

They lingered, loth to go it would seem and expressed their pleasure in a most cordial manner. Mrs. Henderson was dividing some choice flowers among them. She summoned Millicent in the adjoining room for her share.

“If you *could* stay,” with tender emphasis.

“No—I had better come down some other time.” Her voice had a tremble in it.

“I suppose it is best. But I want a whole long day. Charlton told me. My dear ——”

She gave the young girl a long, tender kiss. Millicent’s heart went out to her with a strange ardor she could not understand, a secret knowledge that she could make her happy, and a great gladness.

“He will be disappointed. He begged me to keep you, he would have stayed, but I was afraid it would be embarrassing before all these girls, for a man in love can see only one.”

“Yes, I am glad he did not. I should like to remain, but ——”

“I understand. When your sister’s friends have gone, there will be nice long days or evenings again. Child, I do believe I love you. I had thought I should never do more than like any one again.”

Millicent raised her soft eyes with a pleading light in them, and it touched the heart of the elder woman.

“We had an elegant time!” declared Agatha Losee as they found Mrs. Carew alone on their return. “What a handsome, fascinating woman that Mrs. Henderson is! I was completely carried away. Miss Millicent, have you many such friends? If so, I shall envy you most decidedly.”

"Why, you haven't been enthusiastic about her, Milly, and you certainly are a great favorite."

Honor looked at her as if she would solve the mystery. Millicent colored in spite of her efforts.

"Mamma—you like her—of course ——"

"She interests me. When I was a girl, no doubt a woman like that would have fascinated me. She is delicate and well-bred, generous, cultivated and has excellent opinions about many things. I wish she really took root somewhere. She could do fine work in the world. But then—she has traveled about so continually. O, girls," with a radiant smile, "there is nothing like home and home-life and a family to keep one's heart warm and interested."

"And she has such beautiful gems and laces, and lovely old medallions of emperors and famous women. It seems a shame to keep them shut up. But it was too bad not to see the young man."

"O, didn't you see him?" asked Mrs. Carew.

"No. I dare say the prospect of so many girls frightened him. There was a Miss Mains who had met him at dances, and I half suspected her of having a penchant for him. Is he so irresistible, or is it his money?"

"Milly, you have seen the most of him, what do you think?" asked her mother.

"I—I do not know," and the young girl seemed busy adjusting the ends of her necktie.

"O, don't ask Milly," laughed Honor. "I doubt if she has a coherent idea about any young man."

Then they dispersed to plan some other pleasure. Mrs. Eric Kenneth came in presently to see if the girls did not want to join their Nova Scotian party, since their guests were to leave early the next week.

"Why, that would be just splendid!" cried Honor.

"I was thinking what we would do next. Mamma doesn't feel that she can get away until August, the world has laid so many cares on her shoulders. And I have to lay in large enough stock of pleasure to last me next year."

Mamma did not see any serious objection. Millicent hesitated.

"But you may count on me, surely, Cousin Princess. I shall be just delighted to take a tour among the blue noses."

"Eric thought it would be so much pleasanter for me," she said. "O, I hope you will both go," and she looked longingly at Millicent who colored deeply.

"You were just lovely to think of it," cried enthusiastic Honor.

Dr. Carew decided it would be a nice trip for both of them. Millicent was aghast at the prospect. Wednesday of the ensuing week was the day appointed. Reese was wild to join them also.

Millicent went to her room early that evening. She could not listen to the chatter of the girls and the plans. Her future was coming to her in a different fashion and her heart beat in a tumult of mingled hopes and fears. Was she really loved — was she to be taken to another mother's heart, a heart that was lonely and longed for her? There was a kind of exhilarating joy in the thought of the comfort and pleasure she could give.

Yet something told her this would not be pleasing to her parents. But if it was her love and her life! There was a confused and importunate thinking, now on this side, now on that, and a tremulous secret joy that only one person could share, could understand, she said. For it had come to this with Millicent Carew that the love of years went up in the balance when this strange new knowledge was placed in the opposite scale.

She would not go out the next morning. Some word might come for her.

It was not word, but Charlton Henderson himself. If she had doubted before she did not when his arms clasped her and his kiss was on her lips.

"I wanted you so last evening," he began in a breathless sort of way. "I came home feeling sure I should find you there. O, why did you not stay?"

"It — it was not best. You see — no one knows ——"

"That is the sweetness of it, like stolen waters," and he gave a soft laugh that somehow jarred upon her. "Mother told me about your guests. I hate a staring, teasing lot of girls. It takes away the delicious bliss meant only for two. When one is not in earnest it may do very well. I passed them — they were going somewhere in the trolley, and then I guessed I should find you alone. Millicent, you satisfy one. I wonder ——"

"What?" she asked timidly as he seemed to lapse into a dream.

"If you can be satisfied with me as I shall be with you? I am exclusive where I like, doubly so where I love. I shall care for no one but you, you to read to me, to play to me, us two together always."

"O," she cried in a tremor of delight, "that is what I want. I do not care for other people."

"I am not jealous in the ordinary acceptation of the term. If a woman wanted a host at her feet she might have them — I should not be there. I could not share the sweetness of life with a fluttering crowd whose chief appreciation was vapid compliments. What belongs to me must belong to me alone."

She thought this very noble and exclusive. She had really never belonged to but very few people and it seemed one of the refinements of a delicate soul not to

throw one's regards broadcast. There was a yearning desire for self-devotion to the object she loved supremely, and this he required. It gave her an anticipation of happiness.

"Yes," he resumed presently, following out a relapsed train of thought, "if you can be satisfied with me."

"Satisfied!" she echoed. Then she smiled into his eyes and there needed no further protestation.

Presently she roused from her heaven of bliss and told him of yesterday's proposal.

"But you cannot go," and he glanced at her with a soft, yet curiously decisive light in his deep eyes.

"I do not wish to."

"I am glad you do not. Insist that they shall leave you at home. Mother cannot spare you. I cannot spare you. I need you. You have the power to help me, to keep me from straying into by-paths—not very bad or crooked paths—" and there was a pleading expression in his eyes that touched her.

Hers kindled with emotion. How sweet they were! At that moment he loved her with his whole soul and it seemed as if he could do anything for her sake. The pity was that such impressions should be transitory.

"I am not very fond of the gay world, society, I mean. And you do not care for it. I have learned that. We can be supremely happy with each other. You are so restful. Your music takes me into a wondrous world. If I were weary your reading would rest me, if I were ill it would lure me back to health. O yes, you are mine in a sense not often understood. We are the parts, the complements of each other."

Millicent felt curiously inspired. There had been a haunting ideal in her mind, though it had not dwelt much on marriage, except to think that as most girls

married, she should be likely to. She raised her eyes to the handsome face bending over her. It had not the vigor or purpose of Cousin Sherburne's, but then he was always disputing with Honor, and he had been very headstrong in his fancy for Gertrude Maurice, he was masterly and could not endure being thwarted.

She did not understand the weak lines about his mouth, the strand in his voice indicating selfishness. She could not tell then that he was governed mostly by impulse, and that the almost reverent admiration in his eyes would have no intellectual strength to sustain her in a dark hour.

Perhaps no one in youth and a first love considers much about such things, that after all are born largely of experience, though it may not always be one's own. Millicent yielded to the fascination, it was like a strain of beautiful music to her.

Did the fates conspire to befriend her again? When Millicent Carew looked back to this part of her life, the beginning that opened like a rose amid subtle fragrance, she saw the thorns that had pricked her a little, but she had been too full of joy to heed any of the warnings.

Henderson lingered, saying many fond last words.

"I must leave cards for your guests, I suppose," he suggested reluctantly.

"O yes," she answered. She had been half wondering if this visit was to be a secret, and the relief was manifest in her tone. Of course she could make no confession at present.

He laid down the cards. "With regrets," and a peculiar smile played about his lips. "That is one of the polite fictions of society. I should have had my delicious interview spoiled if they had been at home."

She flushed and her eyes drooped.

“You are innocence and honesty, the most delightful combination in a woman.”

One of the pricks came to her, but it was so sweet to have him praise her.

They all met at luncheon and Millicent delivered the message, even to the regrets.

“That is too atrociously bad!” declared Agatha. “A morning call, too! I do want to see this hero who passes scatheless through the mazes of attractive girls. What a pity we cannot call upon him! Why that ought to be fair play.”

The others laughed. Millicent felt a strange heat about her heart, and its beats came rapidly. What ought she to tell mamma? He had not yet asked her to marry him, though that was the certain result of such an acquaintance. To claim it beforehand had an unmaidenly aspect in her eyes. She was bewildered with the sureness of the knowledge, yet she could think of nothing to say. They talked over everything with mamma. No, not quite everything. Randolph had confided his hopes and plans to her and discussed his longings, because mamma was opposed to a military profession. What if she should not approve of Millicent’s lover? O, she could say nothing at present.

Two days later Mrs. Henderson called to see if Millicent would not drive with her in a coupé. They had planned to go to Glen Island. Mr. Ransome had come over, and Reese was their most devoted satellite.

“I’ve been so many times,” Millicent said. “You’ll be just as gay without me.”

“How very devoted Mrs. Henderson is to your sister,” commented Annie North. “Do you suppose it is wooing by proxy?”

Honor looked amazed at the suggestion.

“The thing seldom works, I believe. The wives the mothers pick out do not suit the young men, and the young man’s choice rarely meets his mother’s approval.”

This was the exception, certainly. Millicent met her lover in the park on horseback. He was a fine rider, and she experienced an exultant pride. Other mammas bowed to him, other girls smiled and looked askance at her. A delicate pride quivered through her nerves, a sense of distancing the assured girls.

There was a little ramble for the lovers by themselves, and an exchange of the sweet nothings that lend a glamour to the days when one is hardly won and stands on the brink ready for a delicious plunge.

“I do wonder if that quiet Carew girl has caught Charlton Henderson,” said an observer. “They seem very much at home with each other. Yet she has not been much of a success in society, though her mother is so brilliant. And Mrs. Henderson can be very fascinating when she chooses. But you always feel a little doubtful about her.”

“Her antecedents?”

“O no, they are all right, the riveted links of a long pedigree. And the Henderson side is very good. I dare say the Carews are sticklers for family and all that. Mrs. Henderson affects a becoming sort of pessimism. She can afford to with that fortune.”

The other mother sighed.

“I believe it is all tied up, some way.”

“So much the better for the wife.”

Millicent Carew came home so bright and happy that her mother wondered a little and was half minded to be jealous. Were there too many things in her life and not enough nearness for her own? The little breach between Randolph and herself was healed, and she had

such long loving letters from her son that her heart beat with a girl's joyousness as she read them.

Millicent sat at the piano playing some sympathetic chords when her mother came down.

"I suppose you want to go with Honor and Cousin Princess," she inquired in one of the pauses.

"No, mamma, I do not. I want to have a little quiet. The girls are very nice and amusing and all that, and enthusiastic about everything. But I feel in a sort of whirl, and do not want to be whirled off again before I get my breath."

"I shall like to have you stay, dear." How pretty she looked in this soft light! "We will have a quiet time, and then take a journey somewhere. Perhaps papa can get off with us. Aunt Milly is to have a cottage on the Sound."

Millicent leaned her head back on her mother's bosom. She had never loved her so much, she thought, and she loved the other mother, too. A sudden impulse rushed over her to confess the sweet story. But the next instant her tongue seemed dumb and her heart shrank from the disclosure. Was there anything to tell?

"Honor will have had a glad gay time. They are all very young in certain ways and will soon get over the frolic of life. I know how I used to envy the girls who had a joyous time and mothers. There is but one sweet youth. I want mine to enjoy it. You must blossom out a little more, Milly, sometimes I think you are like a fern frond in spring, but you may be waiting for summer."

What would her summer be, love? Lyndell wondered suddenly how love would come to this girl. She would not toss the semblance about as girls did so often nowadays, but it would be one deep, overwhelming passion that would transform her. She could imagine the

strong, ardent man who would appeal to her; noble, high-minded, cultivated on many lines, with wide sympathies and high aims, who was capable of developing this slow-blooming nature and could bring it out to an exquisite development.

Millicent was not dreaming of her lover's moral or mental qualities but of his kisses and the dreamy untranslatable glance of his eyes; and how glad he would be not to have her go off with Honor.

But the merry throng returned, and the dinner-bell sounded.

A day or two later Agatha Losee was put on her train to go westward.

"I never have had quite such a good time, and I should be inconsolable if it was not for meeting you when we get back to our learned prison house. It will be time to call it Alma Mater when we have graduated," exclaimed the light-hearted girl. "I know I shall make my parents jealous singing the praises of yours. And when we do meet again what arrears of talk there will be!"

Annie said there were no adjectives left for her and new ones would have to be invented to do justice to the subject. She should watch West Point going up the river and send a message of thought transference to the young cadet.

Reese was very outspoken in his regrets, and wished they were sisters. It would be so jolly to have a lot of grown-up sisters.

The house seemed very quiet. Honor was busy looking up the clothes she wanted to take. Every day there were Fresh Air Children to get off, mothers with ailing babies, and the "Little Mothers" who went as they could be spared. Aunt Millicent was going to the sea-

shore cottage and would keep Florence until her mother came. Hope Drayton was Florence's big cousin. She was not so much younger than Honor, but Millicent was keeping her a girl as long as possible.

Ruth began to run in and out again. She had been rather shy of the college girls.

"For I am years older, you know," she said in excuse. "I suppose at Kingsley Hall we were as gay and full of fun, but that seems ages ago."

The young clergyman took up some of her time as well. She was interested in him though she believed it was all for his work.

Millicent Carew saw her lover almost continuously for the next few days. He seemed by some intuition to guess at the times she was alone, and Mrs. Henderson claimed her frequently. She took her driving, she kept her to luncheon and left the young people together. Millicent forgot all other duties in this mysterious, all pervading affection. She was ready to give up all other ties for it.

He had a purpose in thus drawing her entirely to himself. At first he had not felt sure that she could stand adverse criticism. She was yielding, even if not convinced. Circumstances and adroit management had given her in his hands to mould. He was quite sure there would be some friction, and that Dr. Carew, to whom money was as dust in the balance would object to him. But now he had set his heart on gaining his point. He had come to love Millicent deeply in his own fashion. She was necessary to him. He had never met any one who ministered to him so delicately, who completely effaced self for the time being. She fitted into the dreamy part of his life, and that was the most exquisite part to him. He liked that mutual repose. She could sit quiet beside

him and not torment him with useless questions. She was not an exigent woman, but simply content.

When he laid his case before Dr. Carew the level brows were raised in surprise, the quick, penetrating glance was almost like a blow.

"I love your daughter," he said with a pertinacity in his tone that warned the doctor he would not let go easily. "And she loves me."

"You are quite sure?"

"I am positive. She is not a girl to play fast and loose. And love with her goes deep, takes her whole soul. She has confessed it to me."

Dr. Carew flushed. It had gone farther than he supposed. Millicent in love with this fellow! That was what his thought said.

"So far as social standing and means go, I do not see what objection can be made. My father wisely planned for a family and I could not impoverish them if I would. My income is ample. My mother has been prudent and has means beside the income that comes to her. At the club they will tell you that I neither drink nor gamble. I play cards, but it bores me horribly. I take a little wine or champagne now and then—that I believe is the extent of my folly."

Dr. Carew was amazed at his cool assumption of superiority, his satisfaction with himself. He was so used to earnest men with purposes to their lives. This man was not even a butterfly of fashion, a devotee of golf nor a frequenter of games.

He could not at once formulate his objections as there were so few salient points.

"I must discuss the matter with my wife and think it over," he replied briefly, bowing a little haughtily.

There was no need of discussion to stir up bad feelings.

Charlton Henderson would marry the girl presently in defiance of any one. But he felt a little vexed since society through the winter had not grudged him the position he had taken and cared for so little.

The doctor came in early, rather nervous and flurried. Lyndell was at her desk writing letters. She too looked as if something had occurred to discompose her, but she smiled quickly and then glanced up a little alarmed.

“What has happened?” she asked.

“Where is Millicent?”

“Gone to drive with Mrs. Henderson and will remain to dinner, I wish——”

“What do you wish?” gravely, and seeing the cloud of anxiety settle about her mouth and eyes, he kissed her tenderly, knowing she would approve his views.

“I heard a bit of gossip that annoyed me. But I shall take Millicent away in a few days. I am afraid I have not been as careful a mother as I ought.”

“About—the young man, Henderson?”

“Yes. I was congratulated,” in an offended tone.

“He left me a little while ago. He has asked for Millicent, and is very confident of her love.”

“O, it can’t be. Why I must have guessed! She could not have kept it from me! She would not. He is mistaken.”

“In the estimation of the world it is a good offer.”

“But Bertram, we do not care for the world. We do not desire any of our girls to marry for wealth alone. No, I could not consent.”

“What is your objection?”

“I can hardly reduce the chaotic impressions to real objections. There is not enough to him. He has no steadfast purpose to life, no aims, I was going to say no beliefs. I think he has none. He ends a sentence with

a doubtful laugh when any intellectual or religious subject is under discussion. I always feel that he would sneer if he were not too well-bred, or had sufficient energy. I do not know about his moral character ——”

“I have heard no detrimental whisper concerning that. I wish I could put my finger on something and I should know my feeling was not a mere idle prejudice. But there is a certain expression in his eyes, in his whole face. It is a weak, self-indulgent face, and yet in some respects a handsome one. He has more power than he uses.”

“He has been very much admired, now that I come to think of it. And ——” with a critical little smile, “he has the good opinion of society. He is devoted to his mother. I suppose there are many nice girls who would be glad to marry him. But I don’t want to give him Millicent. I do not think she has come to her full stature. She is young for her twenty years. I cannot believe she loves him.”

“I think we are agreed upon the point. I really do object to take a man with so little purpose and responsibility into our family circle. O Dell, dear, are we unreasonable people? We tried to shake Randolph’s determination and now we must admit that he was capable of choosing for himself. His real heart and ambition is in this profession and no other, while Reese with all his fun and wide interest that looks a little like unsteadfastness is a born surgeon and will make a fine physician.”

“But marriage is so different.”

“And makes or mars a life. I have seen so many disastrous marriages, though I think much is owing to the lack of that wisdom that makes the best of a sad mistake. But ——” with a smile of rare sweetness that

brought back to Lyndell the joy of their early love—"we want the best for ours. We are not willing they shall press up to the highest amid discouragements."

"Surely that is not wrong?" An apprehensive light quivered in her eyes.

"No, we pray for the best always. Did not the great exemplar do the same—'Let this cup pass.' But we accept the will. I cannot consent to this step at once—I cannot cordially endorse him."

"But I know Millicent. Even if her feelings are somewhat engaged, I am sure she will listen to reason," interrupted Dell. "We have been so full of excitements the last few weeks that perhaps I have not kept in touch with her as I should."

"And Mrs. Henderson is a fascinating woman when she wills. I don't often wish to turn people inside out nowadays, since I meet so many ready to do it for my delectation," and a half smile glinted across his face, "but I would like to know what is in the depths of the heart that she doesn't show. Sometimes she seems very frank, but I have a feeling there have been more disappointments in her life than she cares to own."

The carriage stopped. "There is Millicent," and the anxious mother sprang up.

"Do not question her to-night," entreated the doctor. "Let us consider all sides of the subject."

Millicent kissed her father in the hall. Her mother stood on the upper landing.

"I have had a lovely time," the girl said, briefly, with her good-night.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PROTEST AGAINST LIMITATIONS.

MILLICENT CAREW went directly to her room and threw her hat and wrap on the bed. Turning, she had a strong impulse to slip the tiny bolt in the door to be secure from interruption. She almost knew her mother was standing undecided in the hall, she did not know there were tears in her eyes at the unexpected wound.

She was bewildered by a sudden fear that had fallen upon her; frightened, too. She owed her mother a confidence, but had there been anything to tell until now? She had guessed what all the ambiguous sentences, and the rapturous love-making meant. She had also known since she had been in society that girls sometimes pinned their faith to illusions, complimentary admissions that meant nothing. Not that she doubted the earnestness of her lover, others might deceive, but not this one. Until to-night no real arrangements had been made. He had not even spoken of a ring. She returned to the old specious reasoning, there had been nothing to tell.

He had confessed his interview with her father, but not all its dissatisfaction. His self-esteem had been wounded. There were parents who would welcome him as a suitor for their daughter, and truly the Carews did not stand at the head of everything. Mrs. Carew was well off in her own right he had heard, the doctor made money with one hand and spent it with the other.

There were five children, all yet to be provided for. But he was not marrying for money.

"I dare say your people will be loth to give you up," he said, jestingly to Millicent. "And they may think because I don't go into the slums, or start out to build hospitals or homes, or rush into business, that I haven't much energy or ambition. To be sure I have not. I shall spend most of my time loving you and endeavoring to make you happy. What shall we care for the outside world?"

The young face gleamed in happy lights, and the eyes shone with tender triumph. The exclusive devotion was most enchanting.

"And what if they disapprove—object?"

Had the little hesitation roused all his ardor? For now he was resolved to win her through any opposition. An intensity vitalized the hitherto moderate fancy he had held for her that sometimes rose to the surface when her playing stirred him strongly. He would go through anything for her and triumph in the end. The triumph would be very much to him.

"Disapprove?" vaguely, and with a startled look in her eyes. A sudden misgiving rushed over her.

"My darling, nothing *shall* part us. I think your father doesn't like me very well, but I am not marrying him," with a short sharp laugh that somehow grated on her nerves. "How much do you love me?"

Her very soul leaped to her eyes and would have answered him without any words. Their deep softness grew deeper, tenderer, stronger.

"O, I love you!" she cried. "I could not live without you. I should waste slowly away. There would be no joy left on the earth."

"Then we will brave it together. There will be no

sensible reason for any opposition. It will be because I am a rich man and would rather shower my money on you than sow it broadcast in the slums. I will make yours a sort of fairy life. We will go to all manner of beautiful places together. We will hear all the great singers and musicians, and steep our souls in the most exquisite enjoyment. We will devote our lives to love and happiness to all manner of delights."

A subtle light burned beneath his drooping lids, his lips were wreathed in seductive smiles. The indolence of his nature had kindled into a flame that terrified while it swept her along into a swift current. She breathed the enchanted air of his presence, his light touch thrilled all her nerves. Unmanly vehemence would have made her shrink from him, this was gentle as a summer sea.

"I love you," she said again, with a long sigh. "I shall always love you."

"I believe you. You cannot give me up if you would. For we are parts of each other. We are the two whom God hath joined together. My darling, He has brought you to me, and you will be my salvation."

He did not believe in any God, but he fancied he might come to for her sake. She did. He could make no stronger appeal to her. He knew now his power would outweigh any other love.

He had driven home with her and kissed her rapturously before he had said good-night, there in the carriage. She was in a sort of trance and did not want the charm broken, not even by her mother's tender affection.

No one came to disturb her. She was very wakeful, it seemed as if sleeping would be a waste of time. She took up a volume of poems, read and dreamed until past midnight. Did any girl ever love like this before? Was ever just such happiness prefigured to any one! Youth

believes it discovers many things, and learns later that it is only they who are new to the discoveries, which are world old.

She wished the next morning she did not have to go to breakfast. She had been fed with angels' food. And to meet any one ——

"Millicent!" her mother called after the breakfast bell had sounded.

"Yes, mamma." She stepped into the hall and they met. Her mother leaned over and kissed her, but the return was perfunctory duty and smote the mother's heart. She knew then how it was with the girl; and a chilly sense of disappointment lay heavy at her heart.

"I think papa is waiting."

Millicent entrenched herself behind a curious wall of reserve. She seemed that moment two different people. The power of Dr. Carew's daughter had waned in some mysterious manner. The new being was enveloped in a fine dignity the prerogative of the woman.

They talked on the safe daily subjects as people do when there is a curious agitation beneath. They went about the small daily duties, the house was so quiet now. A poor woman begged to see Mrs. Carew and laid before her a budget of woes and wants.

Presently the maid brought up a message for Miss Carew. The young girl flew down eagerly. It seemed an age since she had seen her lover.

"I have brought your ring," he said when the first greetings were over. "A prisoner generally wears some sign of captivity. And it helps tell the story. Perhaps you had better confess your misdoings, at all events there is no need for secrecy."

She felt suddenly relieved, and could only answer him with a rapturous smile.

The ring was a fine solitaire diamond in an elegant setting. He slipped it on her finger.

"How could you guess so well?" She pressed it to her lips amid a quick rift of color. He kissed it, and laughed.

"That is too precious to be wasted on an insensate stone," he said. "Has any one made you unhappy by a single word?"

How sweet the solicitude was.

"No. I am glad to tell mamma though. Papa was very nice and sweet this morning."

"Only a brute or a tyrant would be otherwise with you;" and his look made the color deeper, the brilliance in the eyes more adorable.

Lyndell did not disturb the lovers. She was in a maze of uncertainty, and all unprepared for it. Thank heaven there would be years before Honor—was she quite sure college would be a bulwark against love? And yet it was the old, old story. A woman *was* happier in her own home, growing up with her husband, growing older and richer and grander with the blessings showered upon her. O why should she feel so unwilling for her child!

Who of all others would she choose if the choice was hers? Yet she could not imagine Millicent being a rich and fashionable woman, nor a man like Charlton Henderson converted to works of philanthropy. To sink into a vapid, aimless life would be terrible!

There were steps in the hall and the door closed. Presently she felt the personality hesitating at the doorway, crossing the room, and Millicent's slim hand was laid on her lap where the diamond sent out its magnificent ray.

Dell reached up both arms and clasped her tightly.

"Mamma"—tremulously, "I—it is so strange and

sweet. I did not suppose any one would care for me that way in a long while, perhaps. And Mrs. Henderson is so glad. She has always longed for a daughter. Mamma—when you were a girl and loved papa—and I love Charlton. I never could love any one else.”

The hesitating utterance and emotional incoherence touched the mother’s heart. Yet it was hardly fair to take so much for granted.

“Papa was not quite ready to consent,” she said, but the kisses robbed her tone of disapproval. “The acquaintance has been short—it is not like a family we have known for years, and it is best to wait a little before settling such a grave subject. Remember it is for one’s life.”

“O, we can wait years, but then I should go on loving him. I could not help it.”

“Not if he were proved unworthy? You have known him six months, there are six important years we know nothing about.”

Millicent raised herself from her mother’s embrace with a gesture that had some stiffness in it.

“His own mother knows about them, I suppose. And they can’t have been very wrong or she would not love him so.”

Lyndell smiled at the reasoning.

Millicent turned her ring around with girlish pleasure, but there came a set expression about her lips. She had no arguments to advance, she loved him and he loved her. That was enough.

“I want you to be very happy,” said the mother softly. “I would like to have no misgivings.”

“Why, mamma, I *am* happy. But if you and papa are going to be—dissatisfied —” she paused some seconds before choosing the word.

“We will wait a little. Engagements are generally long enough to learn whether you are suited to each other.”

They would not ask her to give him up then! So long as they could see each other—she blushed and shrank from the idea of marriage.

Dell waited for her daughter to pour out all her heart in confidence, but none came. She was hurt by the reticence, which after all was natural to Millicent. She had longed for a mother in her season of being loved.

Millicent stole out of the room presently. Dell occupied herself with letters. Here was Randolph's tender, confidential epistle. Yet there had been a little hiatus between them. It was healed now and love had been perfected by the trial. Perhaps she was too exigent. Was it a Sherburne fault she had not outgrown? And here was Honor's bright missive full of dozens of amusing incidents and ardent wishes that mamma was there.

Millicent sat by her pretty window filled with a box of choice blooms and fragrances and caressed her ring, lapsing into tender reminiscences and half exultant hopes. That he should love her seemed a sort of miracle. That he should depend on her for happiness was the great surprise and joy of her life. She should be so glad to do anything, all things for him. There was no elaborate planning in her mind, her love comprised whatever he should ask of her. His will would be her delight.

Dr. Carew felt now that it was difficult to make a protest against the engagement, but he stipulated there should be no plan for an early marriage. Charlton merely acquiesced and kept his reservations to himself. Mrs. Henderson came with congratulations of the most delightful kind and one could not question her sincerity. Lyndell felt herself overborne with the gracious tact, the

really flattering regard. At least Millicent would always have a warm friend.

"I must explain to you," she said, "that in a few months Charlton comes into possession of a much augmented income. The real estate is tied up for possible children, a wise step on Mr. Henderson's part. The investments have yielded a larger amount than was supposed. I have been able to lay by considerable, indeed half the income is more than I find use for. I love your daughter, and you may feel assured she never can come to want. Charlton has no really extravagant habits, unless he waxes wasteful over a wife," smiling with infinite grace.

"I am not sure a large income is the best thing you can give a young man," the doctor replied decisively. "He ought to be able to make some effort for himself."

"Are there not enough workers in the world already?" with suavity and elegant ease of bearing as if she was sure of her ground. "Every avenue seems full to overflowing. Why is it not wise for those who have no need to stand aside, and give place to those who must earn a livelihood?"

"There are other things——"

"I am afraid I have not the vanity of most mothers," she interposed in the little pause he made. "He might have studied a profession, but as I said before the ranks are crowded; to pursue any of these things in a dilettante manner gives no real force to the character, and perhaps keeps out a better man. As for business—I shall have to admit that Charlton has no real business capacity. I should be proud to see him a great railroad president following in some of the steps of his father, but he could not aim at any such height. He is well educated on certain lines, a good linguist, fond of literature, especially

poetry, but no genius. Why not let him remain in the position he can fill gracefully, a young man of leisure ! ”

“ But it seems — pardon me for saying it — a useless life. And the present time is so rich in high purposes that money can aid.”

“ Then let him aid them with his money.”

“ But — there is the living and working among our fellow-creatures in the healthy sympathetic manner that ennobles the worker, as well as he who receives the benefit.”

“ But you have had years of rich experience, Dr. Carew. Did you understand all these grand motives and purposes and plans in your first quarter of a century ? And may not love develop characteristics that lie dormant ? Rest assured that your daughter’s happiness will be my study and pleasure as well as his. She may have a great influence over him.”

Was Millicent strong enough in the main characteristics to exert any decided influence over any one ? She would love and be tender, and yield to the present happiness. After all, was he not asking more for her than she really desired ?

“ At all events,” he made answer gravely, “ there need be no hurry. An engagement is considered a very happy period of one’s life. And if there are any serious differences of character they will find that out.”

So the engagement had to be acknowledged if it was not announced. Millicent blossomed like a rose, but it was for her lover mostly. Her mother had some little heartaches when she thought of the long years of love distanced by this new affection. The girlish timidity was waning. Her lover’s presence made a charmed atmosphere, and her soul seemed suffused with a new-born radiance.

“I have a curious misgiving it is not for the best,” Dr. Carew admitted thoughtfully to his wife. “I have no especial ground to go upon. In my few inquiries I have heard nothing to his detriment. Are we too strenuous, dear, expecting too much of young men? I can see that his mother is right, he has no inborn capacity for business of any sort, and there are enough wrecks and failures on every side. But when pursuit has ended, when the first flavor of possession has worn off, what then will come to life?”

“Children and hopes and wholesome fears and all the mysteries of living,” said Dell. “I am going to trust about it. He is not the sort of man I would have chosen, but if it is right there may be some wisdom we do not see now; and if it is not right pray heaven something may happen to prevent it.”

So they joined the Draytons at the pretty seaside town. Just a few miles distant was a larger resort and some fine hotels. Thither went the Hendersons, this was the mother’s plan. Millicent could visit her the more readily. She was a little annoyed that the Carews had not received the proposal with more enthusiasm.

But that Charlton loved Millicent sincerely, she no longer doubted. She could see the improvement in his character. He seemed to shake off the indifference that had hung around him for years. He brought out his best, and there was cultivation, refinement, a wide knowledge on a few lines, a subtle grace that came near to fascination.

“After all,” said Reese Drayton one afternoon as he was rambling along the seashore with his wife and Dell, “we must admit there is a great deal of work in the world that does not accomplish any true or useful end. It is really labor thrown away, perhaps worse. Think of

the young men who go in business with a little money of their own and a good deal borrowed. For a few years they seem to make headway, then comes failure and it is the kind and trustful friends who suffer. The man himself has lived, sometimes rather extravagantly, on the money of other people. And there are hundreds of similar cases. A man builds a house and beautifies the grounds, another man buys it and pulls it all to pieces."

"That was because he had better ideas," said his wife.

"Not better but different. So a new clergyman comes to a church and uproots the work it has taken years to accomplish. We find it in so many things. There is a great waste of good work. I am not sure but Mrs. Henderson is right in some of her theories. Lyndell, what would you like her young man to become?"

Lyndell colored curiously. "I do not feel ambitious to make him over into anything. I only wish Millicent had chosen differently."

"And what sort of a husband would you have chosen for her?"

"I had not come to thinking about her husband." A pensive smile lingered about her face and deepened the expression in her eyes.

"Would you have chosen me for your cousin when we first met out in California? Yet I think she has not been unhappy with me, and surely she has not degenerated. I was an idle fellow with plenty of money."

"But you had a good deal of character then. I was very young without much penetration, and yet I discerned that."

"And I once thought it was a shame that a girl with such brilliant parts should be thrown away on the son of a country doctor. I had not seen Bertram Carew."

Lyndell had heard this before and it only amused her.

"You see what mistakes we make judging each other."

"Yes. I wasn't the brilliant girl."

She laughed with some of the old archness.

"Millicent," to his wife, "remonstrate with that heretical opinion. And—do you really consider money a misfortune?"

He glanced humorously at Lyndell.

"No, I do not," she answered seriously. "It is one of the world's best gifts when one knows how to use it wisely."

"That I think comes from experience. This young man's mother has some fine, strong qualities. His father certainly had business wisdom, good judgment. The provisions of his will show that. Perhaps the youth has been a little spoiled, but he is not arrogant, he is not vain, and it seems as if somewhere along life these stronger qualities will come to the fore. I am a sufficient believer in heredity to be quite sure of that."

They caught sight of the young people turning a little curve and coming towards them.

"They are admirably matched at all events, and are a decided ornament to Nature's drawing-room, which is considered a trying test, I believe," said Mr. Drayton.

Lyndell felt at that moment that she was unjust. Her daughter's happy face smote her. Was it not the child's happiness and not her own that was under consideration?

She had to admit that Mr. Henderson was well spoken of and much admired, a gentleman in culture and behavior. He understood pictures very well if he was not an art critic, he was fond of the Italian and the older French poets. If he had been a society devotee she could have understood him better—it augured well for

Millicent that he was not. How many people took the vital interest in life that her circle did? And yet people were happy on other lines.

Was it because Millicent was all sufficient for him that he cared so little for the others? He did not fraternize with them when they came down from their northern sojourn and joined the party. Honor was full of life and glow and eagerness, and much surprised.

"He is hard to get on with," she said to her mother. "He doesn't care for the common little things and the fun, but then Milly is different from most girls, or some girls, at least. O dear, how funny it seems! And I always thought Milly was the kind of girl who wouldn't marry. She wouldn't be jolly at West Point when we all had such a good time. Annie North is still wild about it. But I do think Mrs. Henderson is splendid."

She certainly was charming to the younger people. She went out with them one day in a pretty steam launch ever so far up the coast. And then there were wonderful rides to curious places round about and they unearthed much legendary lore.

But summer waned. There was the return home, the getting settled to the ordinary duties, the dispersion of those whom circumstances called elsewhere. Honor was back at college, Bertram Beaumanoir went to South America with a scientific exploring party, Reese Carew entered Columbia to his father's great delight, Hope Drayton was a pretty young girl who would make her bow to society in the early winter. She and her mother were delightful friends. Mrs. Constantine Murray held an enviable place in literary and artistic circles, and her receptions were considered pleasures indeed. Princess Kenneth's singing was often one of the attractions.

Ruth Ensign had a very happy letter from Ray Stan-

wood. At Venice they had, or rather she had an unlooked-for episode. She, Ruth, was to read it to Mrs. Kenneth and Margaret.

“Do you all remember when I was so ill at Bar Harbor and you nursed me with such tenderness? Dr. Burke was so kind and solicitous. I liked him very much, but I couldn't have dreamed then what was to happen even if I had been given to romancing. While we were rambling about Germany we met him one night at a little inn. He and papa became great friends at once. He knew all about mamma's sad death that seems so like a dream to me now. Some relative had left him a little money and he had started on a holiday.

“It was very pleasant to have him. We went through Switzerland and saw the magnificent Alps, we went to Vienna, to Italy, and rambled through dear old towns and beautiful cities and unearthed so many old legends and happenings. It seemed to me I grew happy by the moment, yet I never dreamed there was any other cause for it. And a few nights ago the mystery dawned upon me with just a word and look. Then after a moment of delicious happiness I thought of papa. How could I leave him when I was all he had, and his life had so many sorrows in it. So I told Dr. Burke I should never marry, but he had discussed the matter with papa who had given his consent, and he would not listen to my making any sacrifice.

“It is so queer and strange and delightful. I had resigned myself to being the Sherburne old maid in my generation of cousins, but single women have come to be of so much consequence nowadays that it didn't seem an uncomfortable destiny. Yet love is such a splendid thing, there is nothing in the world like it.

“Dr. Burke is to go to a pretty town not far from

Boston where an old cousin of his father's wants to give up practice and have him take it. But oddly enough the old gentleman told him he must look up some nice girl and marry her before he came. And when we met that first evening he made up his mind at once. He is to return in the late autumn, but papa and I will finish out our year. There are still so many places to visit. It has been such a happy year."

Auntie Dell had a letter also and rejoiced over Ray's promising future. Mrs. Kenneth felt that she had known Dr. Burke very well and could truly congratulate Ray Stanwood on her prospects. Love had come to her when she could very truly appreciate it.

O, the chances and changes to life! Lyndell remembered when Ray's mother had so carelessly left the child in her charge and gone her selfish way. There had been sorrows in the girl's youth but she had taken the trials with a courage that had developed her character nobly.

Dr. Carew had withstood the pleading of the Hendersons for an early marriage. Charlton was vexed, and the opposition made him the more resolute to gain his point. Lyndell felt, with a pain only a mother could experience, that her daughter was being weaned away from family interests. She performed her daily duties and made calls in a perfunctory manner. What a delight Princess' engagement had been to the family! Even Pearl had not lost interest in her cousins, but wrote charming letters, and was counting on Ray's visit to Paris. But Millicent withdrew into herself, and seemed not at all inclined to share her joys with any one but her lover and his mother. He took his rights in an imperious sort of manner; while the tender, graceful assertions of authority over Millicent captivated her, since youth inclines to an exercise of power.

The Hendersons were stopping now at a hotel. Charlton had planned to go abroad again, and Millicent was delighted with the prospect of having her lover-husband for a guide. Mrs. Henderson resigned her son so graciously to the young girl, indeed had grown so fond of her that there could be no cause for jealousy. Millicent could not but be flattered by the regard so plainly shown and the favors lavished upon her.

Lyndell felt the loving, hearty family affection was gone, and, in her mind, consented to an earlier marriage. But both Randolph and Honor were growing nearer in her heart and life. Her son was looking at the future in a large, comprehensive manner. Honor was gay and bright and full of ambition, but little longings for home cropped out that comforted the mother's anxious heart.

CHAPTER XV.

NOT WISELY, BUT TOO WELL.

LYNDELL CAREW came in late one afternoon, wearied, and her buoyant spirits depressed with failure in an attempt to regenerate a household that had seemed to her at first a promising case. Work had been provided. A new home, both tidy and pleasant, had been found. The eldest girl, barely sixteen, had been snatched from impending danger.

To-day she had found the father in a drunken stupor on the floor. The girl had renewed her companionship with her admirer and gone to live with him. There were four younger children. The mother had just been to a second-hand establishment to dispose of some garments for bread. At best she was a listless, indolent sort of person, with no steady mind of her own, but swayed by every passing impulse.

The house was so still. Grandpapa had been in Virginia for several months. Florence had gone to tea with a schoolmate. No merry voices greeted her. Jean Ingelow's pathetic lines ran through her mind —

“To bear, to rear, to lose.”

Was she beginning the losing pathway, an autumn-time of life when hopes fell and faded like the leaves, some of them not yet ripened? She had counted on the joys and satisfactions increasing, she had also counted on the work of her hands prospering. Had she been remiss anywhere?

The maid tapped at the door.

"Mrs. Henderson is down-stairs," she said.

Lyndell nodded.

She felt worn and faded as she glanced at the fresh, well-kept face in its middle-aged magnificence, its elegant French toque and the soft, fluffy boa that nestled about the chin. Was not this woman taking the best of life with a clear conscience? Dell felt a little irritated at the sumptuousness.

"I am glad to find you alone," she began when the first greetings had passed. "I have some tidings that will surprise you as much as it did me. My son was fain to come and explain the matter, though it was their intention to keep it a secret for some time. A little incident roused my suspicion at luncheon, and I taxed him with it afterwards. He confessed."

"You do not mean ——" Lyndell turned deadly pale, and her tongue refused to frame the rest of the sentence.

"I mean that these foolishly romantic young people have taken the affair into their own hands. They were married privately yesterday afternoon. They affect to consider it only a very sacred betrothment, and now that they are sure of each other, they are willing to do penance by waiting any length of time for a public announcement. I do think my son was afraid something would happen at the last to prevent. He is very much in love. Perhaps I have never done him quite justice. He is not fickle, but, on the other hand, he seems to have cared very little for the fair sex."

Married! That her own child could do this!

"My dear Mrs. Carew, now that this has happened, let us see how we can present the best face to the world. I will take the blame on my son. I think he overpersuaded Millicent, and his intention was to have a public marriage later on. She is very sweet, and adores him. I cannot

tell how young people feel in these matters. I never had any real girlhood or lovers. My early years were spent with two ailing old people, and Mr. Henderson was very much my senior, but he made me a most generous husband. I was sorry when Dr. Carew insisted upon a long engagement, but I tried to keep Charlton resigned. The combination of influences has failed, it seems."

"I can hardly think!" Lyndell's voice broke with agitation. She felt weak and sick. "What do you propose?"

"I propose—nay, now I insist upon a second public marriage as soon as possible. The other was performed by some obscure East Side clergyman. They have a certificate—I have it with me. We have talked a little of a journey to the West—around the world, perhaps; but Charlton would not go without Millicent. It will be pleasant and instructive for them. Of course I shall be with them. O, Mrs. Carew, you need not fear that your child will ever lack any comfort. I have come to love her very dearly. You, in your plenitude of affection, can hardly understand what this is to me."

There was a perceptible fall to the pleading voice that touched Lyndell Carew; and gave an impression of the utmost sincerity.

"I am so bewildered. Dr. Carew must be consulted," she gasped tremulously.

"You must see that my plan will be best. There can be no scandal, no mysterious suggestions. And if there should be children, everything must be above suspicion for their sakes."

"O, thank you for your thoughtfulness. Yes—I think your plan *is* the only proper one. And you are most kindly in not being vexed. I know you love Millicent. I know you will care for her ——"

“To my life’s end,” returned Mrs. Henderson, solemnly. “You know there will never be any want in her life, that simply cannot come. And if my son should turn out a spendthrift, which is hardly likely, I should have enough to share with her. If he should not live she would be my most sacred charge. O, you must have that confidence in me !”

The voice rang true as steel. But had the mother any fear of her son ?

“I do believe you, do trust you.” She had never been impressed with Mrs. Henderson’s perfect sincerity as now. She raised her eyes with unspeakable pathos in the thought that another should plead for her daughter.

“Will you and Dr. Carew consider this and decide soon ? Plead for the young people that he may not be too indignant. If I talked an hour I could only repeat what I have said. Young, ardent lovers have done this before. It is no new step. And since it can be so easily retrieved there will be no use in bruiting abroad any dissatisfactions.”

“O, no, no. And the world at large will consider Millicent a very fortunate girl. I am well aware of that. Only—it does not begin well. O, I fear the end !”

“I think neither of us pin our faith largely on the world’s verdict,” Mrs. Henderson replied with a little bitterness. Then she rose. “Had I not better keep Millicent to-night ?” she added softly.

“Yes,” answered Dell with a moment’s consideration. She shrank from seeing her, she shrank also in her inmost heart that it should be so. But she wanted her husband alone in this first sorrow.

“She begged me to make peace. Although I do not think the matter wears the most serious aspect to her. She is true enough not to take such a step if she had not

been engaged with your consent. And I think now if you were to insist upon a year's waiting before the marriage was acknowledged, she would consider it her duty to obey."

"Perhaps we had better have consented," returned Lyndell weakly.

She went slowly up-stairs with a crushed feeling at her heart as if her strength was ebbing fast away. O how glad and happy she had been when the twins were born. Three years she and Bertram had had each other alone. Had they been perfect years? They had learned many things about each other, they had learned the grand patience that waits on development of character. One cannot go easily out of the circle of human experience, and always there was something new to attain. God held it all in His hand. He had allowed this. There was some lesson in all the events of life.

The doctor did not come in to dinner. She and Reese were alone. Would this eager, honest, ambitious boy disappoint her by and by? What a responsibility every relation in life was! Children began so joyously. There was so much love and hope, such confident waiting. And then the years of satisfaction or disappointment. Might not something sweet and noble grow out of the disappointments even?

She listened to the proud and merry chat. Reese was a very thorough boy. The lessons, the ball club, the gayety and fun, the Latin verses, the curious facts he had picked up in reading. He thought with a sort of tender son-like delicacy that she was lonesome—that was the way he translated her gravity, and he was trying to entertain her.

Then he went off to his lessons. Sometimes a guest or two or three dropped in, but to-night she was left to

solitude and her own thoughts. Then Florence came home full of childish brightness of the good time she had enjoyed.

"Mamma—don't you suppose I could have a party sometime?" she asked eagerly.

"Why, yes, dear," with a little slowness that was not hesitation.

"O you delightful mamma. We were talking it over. There are four girls who can have parties, and I make five. One is to be Christmas eve, Ethel Blake's birthday. Why it will take most all winter!"

She danced around on one foot. Presently there would be only this little girl in the home circle.

"There, you must run to bed. See how late it is getting."

There were kisses and kisses. She was demonstrative like Honor. And she recalled the fact that baby Millicent had always waited for caresses, not proffered them. How many odd little things she remembered to-night, just as mothers do when their children are dead.

The hall door opened and steps were on the stairs. She came to the doorway and went at once to her husband's arms and heart.

"Dell, dear;" for all the hours of sorrow gave way to a flood of tears like a rushing stream.

She was not a crying woman. Some wound must have gone deep. Word would have been sent to the office if it had been sudden illness—

"My darling, what has happened? You are overwrought, tired perhaps. I wonder if you do not take too much of the world's care on your shoulders? I shall have to look more closely after you."

"O Bertram!" in a broken, sobbing voice.

He led her into the room. The light was turned low,

and the pink-tinted globe gave a sort of happy glow, as if it must dissipate sorrow. His day had been trying, and an hour ago he felt he must drop into bed, half dead with fatigue. The crisp air had freshened him a little; his wife's sorrow made him suddenly alert.

“What is it, Dell?”

He seated her on the lounge and raised her face. The paroxysm of tears was over.

“Mrs. Henderson came in with strange tidings. You would not think Millicent could do such a thing! She is married. She was Charlton Henderson's wife when she came home yesterday afternoon.”

For a moment he could not speak. Then he said, in a low; choking tone—“Are you quite sure?”

Lyndell was calmer then, and told him the story as she had heard it, and Mrs. Henderson's proposal.

“That is right and best. But—Milly! Pray heaven she may never repent. Perhaps I wrong the young fellow; after all, there are hundreds like him, with no especial aim to life, even among those who are compelled to earn their living. Have we the sure right to the very best?”

She had asked for the very best with an insistent prayer, since prayer is the soul's sincere desire. And this had come in its stead.

“I have had a curious feeling that in some of the earlier years he had been intemperate. I hated to ask his mother. If one has sinned and repented, it is cruel to drag all the old things out to light. I did ask her once if she knew of any reason why he should not marry a sweet, pure-minded, innocent girl, and she declared there was none. He despises any show of drunkenness. That is honest, I am quite sure, for he is no temperance fanatic, as reformed people often are. He has a good deal of

power over Millicent. Lovers generally do have, I believe. I once persuaded you to a step ——”

There was a smile that did not get leave to come out through the sadness. But Lyndell felt it.

“It is curious,” she began after a pause, “but you remember my own father made a private marriage. I think mamma must have been sweet and lovely, but it did bring about a good deal of sorrow.”

“Everybody is consenting to this. And whatever comes, I feel assured she will have a friend in Mrs. Henderson. There will be no poverty, and rail at wealth as we may, ills are easier to bear when money stands back of them and keeps the wolf from the door.”

“I could not bear to have her suffer. Honor could fight with a hard fate, but Millicent would be discomfited and yield.”

“We cannot tell what lessons are necessary to the perfection or even the development of character. Only God sees that and knows the end from the beginning.”

“But—surely He did not send this! The secrecy, the deception—the disobedience, for it has been that. They had only to wait a little while. Perhaps by spring we would have consented.”

“I like Mrs. Henderson’s plan,” Dr. Carew said presently. He could not answer Lyndell’s question. There were things God allowed—“for the hardness of their hearts.” “Where there is property tied up to another generation, it is best to have everything so that it can be easily and legally proved.”

“I could not endure the mortification,” Dell said, honestly, while a quick color flushed her pale face.

“We will arrange it to-morrow. And now, dear, do not fret over it. I have a feeling that somewhere along

the years our child's real soul will come back to us, broadened and enriched by the experience."

"But I feel sometimes as if I had been careless and neglectful of my child's true welfare. I did not understand her, I do not now. She was rather backward, she has cared so little for what interests most girls. It seems to me, with her qualities, she should have been a student or a genius, and she is neither. Mrs. Henderson has brought out some dormant traits, but whether they will be her best, or for her truest welfare ——"

"My dear, now we must accept. We will try and not mar their happiness by too many moral strictures. I am more than sorry Millicent could be a party to any deception. When we are able to train minds so as to create a true moral perspective, these things will cease to be. But I am afraid each generation must learn by its own experience."

"I am glad you do not blame me," she said tenderly, clasping his hand. O the consolation of his loving strength!

"I am not going to blame you or heredity. We will not even call it a Sherburne Inheritance."

He did smile a little then, and comforted her only as a true, strong love can comfort.

The next morning he had an interview with Mrs. Henderson and his prospective son-in-law.

"We meant to wait for the regular marriage," the young man declared a little sullenly. "This was purely a betrothal. It made us both sure of the future. How did I know but you might withdraw your consent?"

"Not after my word had passed."

Millicent was sent home to her mother, who dreaded the first few moments of the interview.

Lyndell Sherburne would never have done just this

thing. She might have defied and had her own way before she came sincerely to understand the better way. But she was courageous and not very yielding.

Millicent's fair face flushed a little. She went straight to her mother.

"O mamma," in a sweet, deprecating tone, "I am sorry Charlton should have been so foolish before his mother and made this trouble. We were not to consider it a marriage at all, but just a solemn promising to each other that could never be broken. I should have been true, for I could not have loved any one else; but he was afraid papa would persuade me to give him up. We did mean to wait a year, and then he would insist. Why doesn't papa like him?" a vague line of annoyance settling across her forehead, a protest in her eyes.

"But, my child, the deception ——"

"We did not mean it for deception." Her tone had grown tranquil. "There are often secrets between people that are not deceptions."

What sophistry had crept into the young girl's mind!

"A mother has the right to her child's confidence."

Lyndell looked intently at her daughter. What fine moral trait was lacking?

"Mamma," with great reluctance—"how could any one confess all a lover says? Did you when you were a girl? And when you have given your whole soul to one ——"

"Not all he says, dear. That is sacred between the two. But she ought not listen to any persuasion of wrong-doing, anything she thinks her parents would not approve."

"But we did not mean it for wrong or harm. If I gave him up it would spoil all my life. If I had to do that I should like to go into a convent. Mamma—sup-

pose some one had insisted you should give up papa? We were going to wait patiently."

Was there any use reasoning? The gentle clinging to her own opinion—the other opinion that ruled hers, with an obstinacy that could not be shaken convinced the mother. She sighed gravely. How had she lost the firm sense of right?

"O mamma, don't be unhappy about it," Millicent pleaded. "For if you would rather, we will let things remain as they are, and wait the year. It will not be so very long, two months have gone already. You know now we shall be sure of each other. It was the little uncertainty that made it so hard to bear."

"Then we will try to make it easier for you. There really is no need of delay." The mother's voice was suddenly firm.

"O mamma, now you are lovely!" She came and kissed her fondly. But there was no appeal for forgiveness.

"I hope you will be happy, very happy," said the mother over a great throb in her heart.

"O, we shall be," replied Millicent. "And much as Charlton has traveled he has not been round the world. Think of such a journey! And I have seen so little!"

She had meant by and by, next summer perhaps, to take both her girls and share their joy over the delights of the old world, the pictures, the quaint towns, the music, the old historical places. She was being shut out of this life with a careless sort of joy that sent a pang to her heart. There was only acceptance.

One soon adapts one's self to the inevitable. The two mothers arranged the marriage, neither being very joyful. But Mrs. Henderson had experienced some fears.

"There is no need of an elaborate trousseau," an-

nounced Mrs. Henderson. "Let it be a church wedding with a handsome gown, and that she must leave behind. She will need a plain traveling dress, and a pretty one. A silk gown if there are any occasions, and the rest one can buy. It is not a good thing to be hampered with too much baggage."

Any other woman but Lyndell Carew would have felt flattered at the commotion the wedding announcement created. Congratulations and gifts poured in. There were envyings and heart burnings. That this quiet girl who had been scarcely a year in society, and not greatly noticed, should carry off the prize was a matter of amazement.

Millicent was full of interest and blossomed out like a rose. The real reason for the sudden change was locked in the hearts that still suffered from the pang. Not even Millicent Drayton was taken into confidence, though Dell longed intensely for her sympathy. Grandpapa returned, Aunt Tessy and Uncle Leonard came up, but Sherburne sent a handsome gift. Honor stole three days from her busy life, astonished beyond measure at the tidings.

"I suppose it is being in love," she said to her mother. "Milly has grown mysteriously into another person. She never was an effusive girl, perhaps more demonstrative to grandmamma than any one else, but never taking a wide interest like volatile me. I should call her a little cold, a little narrow. That comes from college training," and an arch gayety hovered about her lips. "You get used to exactness. Not that she is any less dear to me. But she has suddenly unfolded into a woman. There is a peculiar dignity, she seems to know her own mind, she has an air of authority. It is very queer for retiring, indifferent Millicent. But I notice her thoughts and wishes

and plans are Mr. Henderson's. She seems too much an echo of him, but perhaps that is so with a girl very much in love. O mamma, am I unkind?"

She clasped her arms about her mother's neck and laid her glowing cheek to the other that was a trifle pale. Would this girl come to love another so wholly some day that the mother would be crowded out?

"Mrs. Henderson does love her very much, so she won't have the trial of a jealous and selfish mother-in-law. And it is evident that Mr. Henderson adores her, though somehow I rather doubted him in the summer. I like him and I don't like him. He seems to have two characters. He drops into indifference so easily. But I am not sure first impressions are to be implicitly relied upon. One of our best and bravest teachers I did not like at first. We all decided to make her life a burthen. What hateful things girls can do without going out of bounds!"

Honor raised her head suddenly, and there were tears shining in her lovely eyes and a flush on her cheek. It was a proud, sweet face.

"We heard her brave and sorrowful story, and now the girls are wild about her. So I hope we shall all come to like Mr. Henderson ever so much. And it is splendid to think of going round the world and seeing everything and having whatever you wish for."

"We hope she will be very happy," returned the mother. Why could they not have the faith that all was well and would go well.

Millicent was extremely sweet and grateful, and this gave a little pang to Lyndell's heart. That the private marriage was anything to regret when it had brought about so satisfactory an ending, seemed strange to her. In her mind it was as she had said, a sacred be-

trothal. When the time came they would be publicly married and keep their secret. It was just between the two.

In truth, most happenings seemed between the two. Dell wondered if she had ever gone through this utterly exclusive stage of love-making? What Charlton did and thought and said was Millicent's guide in everything. Her mother gave up any attempt at reasoning.

Yet she had to admit that Charlton Henderson carried himself well and without any undue elation. He would never drop into the familiar relations that had characterized the Sherburnes and Beaumanoirs. Then she be-thought herself of her girlhood—no, the Sherburnes had not all the virtues, nor had they escaped many of the defects of human nature. And when tears came to her eyes she tried to smile them away.

The wedding was one of the events of the season. The bride looked lovely in her wedding gown, and more than one was surprised to find her a really pretty girl with the promise of a splendid air and figure. Mr. Henderson looked his best, was both proud and handsome, and Dr. Carew gravely gave away his daughter.

Millicent herself had protested against a reception. The marriage was at high noon, there was a gathering of the family, warm congratulations, and Millicent donned her elegant traveling gown of gray, her favorite color. There was a sort of cheerful confusion and little real opportunity for sentiment. They were all to go to the train that was to start at three.

At the station there was quite an ovation. Friends and acquaintances wished them all manner of good fortune. Then came the sudden parting good-bye kisses, the final wrench, and Lyndell Carew felt that her first born daughter had gone out of her life forever. Would

she even ever see her again ! A year or two was a long while. Her heart seemed in an icy chill that even her husband's tenderness could not dispel. She was glad so many of the friends were there and that they could talk cheerfully of other things. Many of the weddings had been joyous events ; and this had an outward satisfaction.

Honor half echoed this thought. Nora Mallory had been speaking of her own, and that seemed indeed a long while ago.

"I feel almost as if I belonged to the other generation," she said laughingly. "Hope," to her pretty half-sister that she was extremely fond of, "you must be married in the old church at Ardmore. City weddings in churches seem kind of grand and stiff, and miss the real heartfelt joy of the old neighbors who knew your mother and your grandmother, and had wished them joy. There will be Aunt Tessy's girls to get married there ——"

"Don't put such nonsense into their heads," laughed Judge Beaumanoir.

"It is a sweet sort of nonsense," said Honor. "A pretty old country church where generations have been wedded. I'd like to be married there myself if I found any one brave enough to undertake me."

"There was some one brave enough to undertake that wise young Daniel, Portia," said her uncle with twinkling eyes.

"I shall never be as wise as that. Papa will not let me study law, nor medicine."

"If you are wise enough to love some one when the right time comes ——"

"Or wise enough to lead a happy, useful life," said Aunt Millicent in the pause.

"Aunt Tessy, why didn't Sherburne come?" asked Honor, suddenly remembering something that brought a flush to her face.

"O, I think—" she glanced at her husband—"I suppose both of you could not leave very well?"

Florence was sitting on the broad arm of his chair, showing him photographs of her schoolmates.

"Why—he didn't seem inclined to come," returned the Judge without raising his eyes.

Honor had a rift of thankfulness that her sister was married. She had really not meant anything by her angry taunt to Sherburne in the summer. Of course he had *not* cared for Millicent, she had a lover then, but he had not even said good-bye to *her*. Last year he had written her some teasing, amusing notes. She knew he could have come for one day. Was he very angry with her? But then Sherburne indulged in fits of temper, only, she was sorry she had made any allusion to Sherburne House.

"What are you considering so intently that it makes lines in your forehead?" asked Dr. Carew, placing his hand caressingly over Honor's shoulder.

"I was repenting of some old naughtiness," in a gay tone, flushing in spite of an effort.

He kissed her tenderly. "Papa," after a pause and in a whisper, "you *do* think Millicent happy?"

"She thinks herself very happy, which is more to the point. We hope it will last all her life through. But I take pleasure in thinking I shall keep you three years longer."

"And perhaps more than that," smilingly, as if it might be a cheerful thing to do.

Several days elapsed before the Beaumanoirs returned home. Letters from Bertram had been quite delightful.

Judge Beaumanoir was very happy in his sons and daughters.

Whether he surmised that Lyndell had some secret dissatisfaction or not, he was most tender and sympathetic; and touched her heart by little comforting sentences. Tessy felt that it must be a loss, and really wished Honor was at home to grow up by the side of her mother.

So the worst week was tided over by the sweet offices of friendship, and the consoling tenderness of her husband.

"If I could be sure all would go well with her," the mother sighed.

"My dear, we must leave that to God. We cannot peer into the future. When we have done our best ——"

"But did I do my best? I think of many little things now ——"

"We can always think of these," he interrupted kindly. "But it is our conscientious intentions, and not always the results. How much sin and misery might be saved in this world if every one knew at a glance, and did his best! There would be no mistakes—we should soon have perfection and that is not promised here."

There were other weddings, and many gayeties. There were enjoyments, too, of the more solid order, and these roused Lyndell from her mood of introspection. Her nature really was too buoyant to be long depressed. Letters came from the travelers. Millicent's were full of the delights of journeys of which she had had very few. The beautiful cities, the glowing land of the far West that had sprung up as if by magic in a half century, the traces of the older civilizations that seemed to transport one back to the days of the Spaniard, the magnificent scenery overflowing with tropical color and richness rendered Milli-

cent really eloquent with her pen. She wrote as if pervaded with joy; and her mother's misgivings were at rest.

It was only a little while before the house was joyous with the glad voices of youth. Was it really summer again? The soldier lad came home much elated, having passed examinations triumphantly and obtained his furlough. A fine sturdy fellow with honor and uprightness in every line of his face, gay too, with the unflagging spirits of youth, that it was plain to see had not been trained out of him with any severity of discipline.

“O mother, how good it is to be at home!” he said joyfully the very first evening. “Don’t plan any journeys or pleasures that will take us away. I just want to roam about the rooms, to see the familiar faces and take in enough love and happiness to last the next two years.”

Lyndell smiled up at her tall son. O, what a delight to have this eager, unfeigned love. How many traits she found like his father, and she counted them over with one of the sweetest joys she had ever known. If the other love returned to her with the blessedness of this!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THORN THAT PRICKED HONOR.

THERE were so many things to talk about.

“Letters are very good, delightful when there is nothing better to be had, but I’d like to hear it all over. How did Milly look in her wedding gown? And what is her husband like? To think of Hawaii and Japan, and India! Why, mamma, we shall be mere nobodies when she comes home! Some time I hope to have a little of that splendid opportunity;” and Randolph Carew laughed joyously.

“You will have to marry a rich wife, or what is better have a rich mother-in-law,” declared Honor, with a mischievous smile.

“And about those girls who came up with you? The taller one seemed to make a deep impression on some susceptible hearts.”

“That’s Miss Losee. And the other—Annie North—I am quite disgusted with her! She is not coming back next term.”

Honor made an amusingly wry face.

“Tired of college life?”

“Going to be married,” in a laconic tone.

“What—Annie North?” ejaculated their mother. “I really shouldn’t wonder to hear that of Miss Losee.”

“Yes, I had a note this morning. She wouldn’t give any real reason at first, then just before commencement she announced that she was going to stay at home and

study housekeeping. She had failed in two of her examinations—she has been rather feather headed the last three months. We thought she was discouraged on that account. Some of the girls insisted she must be engaged, but she wouldn't say positively. There is always so much nonsense talked."

"At a girls' college! I am surprised!"

"Don't you cadets talk nonsense?"

"O, we tell each other secrets occasionally;" and a humorous light played about the young fellow's eyes.

"I had a note, or I suppose I might say it was a letter seeing it was two closely written sheets. It seems she was not really engaged when she left school. Her lover visited her last summer, and he was going out on a ranch. Perhaps things looked uncertain. If he had any success he was to be back again this summer. In May he wrote to her that he was coming back and would be the first to welcome her home. That was what made her lose interest in college life."

"Out on a ranch! Well, with a soldier she might go out to a fort. And what next?"

"Her people think she ought to wait until he is more forehanded, as they say. He has been building a house—two large rooms, and expects to add to it. He wants to marry her and take her out there. It is in Nevada. So she may be married in August. What queer things girls are!"

"I suppose you call yourself an experienced woman! You must take some of the curly knots out of your hair, and the dimples out of your face before you can make any one believe it. You grow younger. Study must agree with you."

Honor sprang up and made a sweeping courtesy, accompanied by a ripple of laughter.

“ And Miss Losee ? ”

“ I half suspect she has a lover. She has two or three correspondents. But she comes back.”

Randolph nodded with a peculiar air.

“ And what else ? Don't omit the least scrap of news. I'm famished for it.”

“ O, mamma wrote to you Cousin Ray was married and gone to her new home ? ”

“ Yes, they returned in May. Dr. Burke came to the city and met them, and they were married at Aunt Millicent's. Then Ray went at once to her new home and they are very happy. Uncle Archie has some position at the Port of Boston, and he goes out to spend his Sundays with them. He thought he was not old enough to give up active life,” explained their mother.

“ He ought to marry again. Middle-aged people have romances. One of our instructors was married at the holidays after having been a widower about five years. His wife is charming.”

“ And Cousin Ned Beaumanoir ? ”

Mrs. Carew smiled. “ I think he took a great fancy to Ruth Ensign, but there was the young clergyman. And Ruth hardly knows what to do. She is so attached to Mrs. Kenneth that she hates to leave her. And Mrs. Kenneth is so used to her care that she hardly knows how to live without her.”

“ So there is a trial in being too well loved.”

“ Just now Ruth has gone to her old home. The last of her queer old people have died, and she has quite a fortune. I think it will be the clergyman presently, and Mrs. Kenneth will have to be divided between Ruth and Margaret. So the Melchias girls will all be settled.”

“ And there is a new host coming on,” said Honor

with a gay nod. "Two more girls of Aunt Tessy's, Hope Drayton ——"

"And Honor Carew," put in her brother laughingly.

"And Florence to take her turn."

"There is not such a great crowd after all. But then there will be Aunt Fanny's children, and then Cousin Nora's children ——"

"The old stories and romances over again."

"And it is queer how many people do get married," Honor exclaimed so gravely that they all laughed.

There was a diversion just then by the carrier's whistle and ring. Letters for everybody. Randolph glanced at two of his and tossed them aside.

"Aunt Tessy thinks you ought to spare them a few days before you go back," exclaimed Lyndell glancing at her son.

"Yes—when it will be two years before I am let out of captivity again. Can't we all go? Why it would be quite a family party."

"I am your man," cried Reese.

"And Honor?"

"I do not believe I want to—in summer. I would rather go to a colder clime for my refreshment," returned Honor gravely.

Lyndell went on with her letter. "O," she said, "Edward is going over to London on some business for the firm—why next week some time. He is very anxious to see you, Randolph. Then you would have to go soon ——"

"Mamma, you and Reese go with him. I will take care of the house and keep papa in order."

For Honor was not anxious to meet her cousin. He must be pretty good at holding grudges she thought.

The maid came up with a telegram for Mrs. Carew. She opened it hastily, and read —

“Plans changed. Will be in N. Y. Friday eve. Start on Saturday.
EDWARD SHERBURNE.”

“O, that’s capital—at least in one way. We shall not have to hurry off. Why, that’s to-morrow! What does make days go so fast when they are all pleasure? I shall be glad to see him, although ——”

Randolph glanced up at Honor who colored and felt vexed about it.

“Wasn’t he rather—I couldn’t make up my mind whether it was Miss Losee ——”

“It wasn’t any of us in particular. He simply wanted all the attention. I thought him disagreeable and selfish.”

“Why, Honor!” and her mother looked up in astonishment. “I thought you all gave him good measure in return. Sometimes you were quite hard on him.”

“Not any harder than he deserved,” impatiently.

“Young people are not always wise.”

“I’m glad there are no girls here.”

“But the girls *did* enjoy him. And he is admired a good deal naturally. So was his father. And Uncle Len has made one of the best of husbands and fathers, and one of the finest of men, a tender, large-hearted man.”

Lyndell’s eyes shone with loving appreciation.

“A year at West Point would have knocked the nonsense out of him,” laughed Randolph. “I suppose it will have to come out by a slower process, but he has too much good sense to hang fast of it forever.”

“I’m sure he wasn’t very amiable the winter he was here and had all that fuss about Miss Maurice as she was

then. I am not a bit in love with him ; ” and Honor tossed her head. “ I shall never go down to a handsome face, merely. ”

“ I should be sorry if you did. But Sherburne has a good deal beside a handsome face and an uncertain temper. He has been winning golden opinions this winter, and is loyally devoted to his father. And his mother and sisters adore him. ”

“ Honor, think of that ! Do you not feel an emotion of adoration in your soul for me ? I have had the rough corners of temper polished off of me. I have learned to be respectful to my superiors in rank, even when I knew they were my inferiors in many other things. ”

“ O, you needn’t count up any more virtues. I adore you, let that suffice, ” and Honor laughed.

“ But you will go down to Sherburne, mamma, ” said Reese. “ I want to see Uncle Underwood’s hospital, and Aunt Fanny is always so bright ; saying such quaint things and making such queer comments. And *my* vacation will come to an end too. O Ran, you needn’t think you are the only one who has to peg away all the year round. ”

“ But you can come home every night and there are the blessed Sundays. No, Honor and I are the heroes of this family, who are sacrificing ourselves for the public weal and enduring homesickness like good soldiers. ”

“ O Ran, were you really homesick ? A big fellow like you ? And you wouldn’t own it, would he, mamma ? ”

“ I am homesick about once a week regularly, ” said the young cadet with an astonishing show of truth in his fine eyes.

“ Were you, Honor ? Did you both cry ? ”

“ I do not have to stay away two whole years without

a sight of those nearest and dearest. But home is a very delightful place, Reese Carew."

"Reese, your grandfather would like you to drive for him," said the young student who had just come up with the carriage.

"And I have some letters to write," declared their mother, "though I feel like idling."

"Stay and comfort me, Honor." Randolph was stretched out in the reclining chair, bolstered around with cushions. "We have always been the best of friends, haven't we? And it's queer, but somehow you always were more my kind than Milly, which must be heresy. You can hardly imagine our quiet shy Milly carrying off one of the big matrimonial prizes! Somehow I did not look for her to be married in a long while."

"Shall I quote that platitude—'It is the unexpected that happens.' Though I do think Milly was desperately in love. O, I wonder if I shall ever be in love, and what it will be like! What are you laughing at?"

"I just cast a backward glance—not to the girls I left behind, but the young fellows at the Point going wild over the summer visitors, the pretty girls, and the flirtations, harmless enough until you get to be a third or fourth-class man!"

"Why so much more serious or dangerous then?"

"There's a chance for an appointment. A girl does not expect to get engaged to a plebe, and a second-class man isn't of much account, only the good time. Did your friends have a nice time?"

"O, they thought it splendid. We were the envy of half the college. Miss Losee has a way of stirring up girls to the uttermost. And some of them declared——"

Honor flushed and paused abruptly.

"Well, what did they declare?"

"It was nonsense;" and she gave a short laugh.

He caught her hand. "That she had captured your brother?"

"That was about it. College girls can scent the possibilities of a lover or an engagement mighty quick, I can tell you. You wouldn't think it."

Randolph laughed. "There was larger game, and she is an attractive girl."

"Don't you think so much flirting is demoralizing?" she asked seriously.

"The fellows have eight or nine months to get over it. It doesn't go very deep."

But all their talk was not nonsense. They took up the heroes of long ago that they had admired and quarreled over in their school-days, some of the orations they had read with youthful enthusiasm, the old poems they had translated, the favorite lines they had been fond of quoting, and she said —

"I found last year what a help this was to me. I got on so much more rapidly, and could go at other studies. There are so many splendid things to learn! So much has happened all along the centuries that are truly ours. And back of them the mysterious races and the lost cities and the wonderful works that we cannot duplicate with all our skill. Cousin Ned is so interested in all these things."

"Honor, you ought to do something, you must indeed, with all this education and enthusiasm," and her brother's eyes kindled.

She did wonder what she *would* do with it.

Edward Sherburne made his appearance just before dinner-time. The Professor, Princess, and Cousin Ned had been asked over, and were there to give him a warm welcome.

He seemed to have changed mysteriously. A stylish and elegant man of the world, he combined dignity and suavity with a certain force of character born of his year's experience among much older men than himself, and being brought into contact with many of the great questions of the day.

Honor had been busying herself with some of the domestic cares and did not meet her cousin until the guests were summoned to the dining-room. All the time she had been in a state of amused wonderment, but she was hardly prepared for the formal clasp of the hand, and the rather distant demeanor. They were all in a buzz of conversation, and she was amazed that he uttered no word to her, not even the conventional inquiry concerning her health. Did the year-old anger still hold good?

It was ridiculous, of course! She motioned Cousin Ned to her side. They were never at a loss for conversational topics, and for a little while kept up a bright talk.

"I don't know how long I shall stay," said Sherburne in answer to Dr. Carew's question. "If we can settle the few points in dispute it may be only the work of a fortnight or so. But I heard at the Porter & Griswold firm, just before I came up here, that there were some new and serious complications. They were quite surprised that so young a man should be sent over; they supposed I was at least thirty-five or so, and had expected father would go. However, they found I understood the matter pretty thoroughly. Indeed," with a smile of satisfaction, "I should be a dullard if I had spent the last three months over the case and had not known about it."

"Can't you indulge in a little jaunt somewhere, over

to Holland, for instance, and Antwerp?" asked Ned. "I had half a mind to take a run over myself. Though you might like Paris or Berlin better."

"O, I don't know, I suppose it would be revisiting the old places with a keener and more intelligent sight. Early youth misses so many things. When I think of the time I've wasted ——"

"Was it really wasted?" asked Dr. Carew with a kind of doubt in his shrewd smile.

"No, Uncle Bert, I do not believe it was, though I am not so much in favor of foreign education until you have taken a home course. But even in so dry and solid a thing as law is considered to be—which it really is not, I find my two years' training in literature of much service. But what glowing dreams I had in those days! I was almost convinced that I should blossom into a poet."

His laugh had a genial, wholesome ring, as if he had overgrown the hurts of youth and no longer shrank from admitting mistakes.

"You were poetical and full of romance," returned Ned. "I looked to see you write an epic."

"And my ideals had no perspective. They were like Chinese pictures. Well, it is fortunate that we outgrow them. Then I became—what adjective can describe my insistent persecution of you, Uncle Bert?"

"O, I didn't call it that," returned Dr. Carew smilingly. "I still think you might have made an intellectual physician and written some treatises founded on theories more or less true. But you never would have gone down into the slums of moral or physical humanity."

Sherburne made a delicate little gesture that was significant.

"All this time," he began in a tone of grave sweetness, "I had forgotten about my own father. I am

afraid gratitude is not one of the virtues of early youth. So I found my walk in life would not be writing a fine epic or teaching literature to minds no more worthy of its grandeur than myself. And here comes your tough old Carlyle, Uncle Bert, hitting straight out from the shoulder—'Blessed is he who has found his work, let him ask no other blessedness.' "

The frank uplifted look went straight to Uncle Bert's heart.

"Life is progression," he replied. "When one rests satisfied, decay of the finer forces is already begun."

"There is always the next thing to the man who feels he has not finished his work," said Ned. "Yes, if you can find time I think we will take Holland. She has such a wonderful history. Why, I am almost inspired to write a book myself."

He quite looked as if he could do it. His eyes were alight with enthusiasm that shone through his glasses, and his face had a delicate flush of animation.

"Why, yes," declared Randolph. "There ought to be a genius in your family to keep up the Sherburne reputation."

They all laughed at that.

"And since my brother Leonard has married an heiress, he will not be likely to further distinguish himself. Is poverty an incentive to greatness, Uncle Bert? If so, I am certainly on the highroad."

"Not necessarily. Think of the millions in poverty who have no ambition to rise! Think of the money spent on education in pure beneficence that never brings forth real fruit. It has to be the quality in the man, then he will rise above poverty, and wealth will be only a stronger incentive."

They were rising from the table. "Honor," exclaimed

Ned, "have you been struck dumb? I have not heard your voice raised in behalf of all these grand aspirations."

"It was all I could do, to listen to the elevation, and power of fine sentiments, and to keep my mind in the proper struggle for enlargement."

"That sounds sophomore-y."

"Of course it does. Wisdom comes by stages. I am quite encouraged that I don't have to find room for everything at once. The junior chrysalid has not yet emerged. Wait until you see me two years hence."

Dell and Princess were standing in range when Sherburne came over to them. Honor went on with her girlish chaff.

"Auntie Dell," Sherburne said in a tone both apologetic and entreating, "I'm afraid that often in my salad days I made myself a bore and a burthen to you. I know I tormented Princess during that unfortunate winter when I was so resolved to have my own way at any cost. I want to thank you both for your patience and sweetness. I am learning all the time what belongs to true manliness, and I hope your goodness and long-suffering will bear satisfying fruit. I did believe myself very much in love with Gertrude, but I know now it was only a strong attraction and a wilful desire. Love is a more sacred thing, that I hope some time will come to me in all its blessedness, so now I can wait."

"O, Sherburne, I do hope that you will find the best and truest happiness when your time of love does come," cried Lyndell earnestly, while Princess raised her eyes in the sweet, unspoken wish. And you have only to go on in the path of true, earnest manhood to become all the dearest of friends could wish for you."

"And fit myself for my inheritance, the gift of your love. I do hope to be worthy of it."

“And the greater inheritance that makes all work nobler,” she said softly for his ear alone.

Randolph stood looking wistfully across to him. He smiled and came over.

“I’ve been recounting my past sins,” he began with fascinating cordiality. “The little disagreeablenesses are often more mortifying than the actual sins; in them there may have been a strong temptation, the others are shameful faults of temper. And I think now I was not on my best behavior last summer when you were trying your cadet best to make each hour agreeable.”

“Why—I don’t remember.” The young fellow flushed through the sunburn. “You and Honor used to quarrel—and there were the other girls—we had a jolly time. I’m going to get them all to come up to the ball next summer, because a very dear friend of mine graduates. He’s been a year ahead of me all the time, but no brother could have evinced a heartier solicitude about me. And I wish you could come. Don’t lose interest in the defenders of your country if you are going to help make her laws.”

“I shouldn’t lose interest in you, anyhow,” with much warmth of tone. “The Sherburne clan have a pretty strong regard for each other.”

“And—Sherburne ——”

“Well?” smiling as the other halted and colored.

“I was thinking of what you said at the table—about your father’s wishes ——”

“O Ran! do you keep that tender spot in your heart? Dismiss it for good and all. The cases are so different. Your father feels that this is your heart’s desire, and I think he is proud of your choice. Then Reese has his heart set on the medical profession. Why I doubt if you would have been a success anywhere else—I went

in it half-heartedly and see what a fiasco I made of it."

He laughed with such a wholesome comforting ring, that Randolph smiled as well.

"I was coming down to Sherburne—we were planning when your telegram came."

"They will all be delighted to see you. O yes, go. A soldier lad will be something new, only you must steel your heart against the admiration of the girls."

"O, I am not of the captivating kind. I wish I had a longer holiday and could join you and Ned. I've been reading the history of the Netherlands and that bigoted, despicable fellow, Philip Second! What a brave stand those people made for liberty! I don't wonder Spain has lost so many of her magnificent possessions!"

Sherburne studied the eager intelligent face and martial bearing. Yes, he was every inch a soldier!

No one guessed then how soon the march of liberty was to wrest from Spain's grasp another of her misgoverned possessions.

"And that you quoted from Carlyle was fine. I must take up the old fellow in good earnest. But history has interested me so much. The making of nations, the making of countries, the great movements and struggles, races dying out, others flourishing in their places. Our own first great fight for liberty, or the second struggle ——"

He paused and flushed, remembering the common family inheritance.

"For brotherhood," annotated Sherburne. "It takes generations to settle large questions and accept large truths. We get narrowed so by individualism. But it is like youth. We do outgrow it and come to know what a larger freedom is like."

"O, go on. You don't know what a wonderful ring there is to your voice."

But the Professor came over. Princess felt that it was time to go home. Would he accompany them? And then there was some general conversation about the visit to Virginia and plans for the summer, and Randolph was gnawing his lip with half-vexation.

"If he had been that way last summer," he thought. But he was much more of a boy last summer, and glad of a sudden relaxation.

"I'll be in to-morrow morning. So I shall not say good-bye. O, but you'll be down to the steamer to see me off! Be sure and come early. Good-night."

Aunt Lyndell kissed him. Honor was talking to Princess and walked down the stoop steps with her, then turned quickly, her pulses throbbing with indignation. At that instant the ridiculous side flashed upon her, and she ran up-stairs laughing. Was it mirth or anger that brought tears to her eyes?

"He is good at holding grudges," she said half under her breath. "He must know that silly speech did not mean anything. As for him—well he was abominable at West Point, a petulant, bad-tempered, self-conceited boy! If he meant half he said about girl collegians it was very poor, vapid reasoning, if he didn't, it was sheer hatefulness. He wanted all the admiration and attention himself. I suppose silly Washington women have just adored him this winter. I'm not going down to him, he will find that, if he waits seven years."

Honor threw up her head and sang in a dainty caroling voice:—

"Then fare ye well Lord Jamie Douglas,
I care as little as ye care for me."

Dr. Carew had gone round to the office for grandpapa, who had a fashion of taking no account of time when he lost himself in some book. Reese and Randolph and mamma were saying delightful, flattering things about Sherburne; she caught now and then a word and pieced them together.

“Honor,” called Randolph.

“O, I’m going to bed.” She pulled down her hair, took off her pretty necktie, than ran in eagerly for a good-night kiss.

“Seems to me you’re in a great hurry ——”

“Yes, I’m tired and sleepy. I advise you all to go to bed, since it isn’t the first Friday night in the new moon, and you do not have to try any charms.”

But she lay awake a long while thinking how adroitly Sherburne had planned that no one should remark his coolness towards her, while he was posing in grand style. How much she had to do with it she never considered. But it was very silly and contemptible for a grown man to get angry over such a trifle.

She went to a school-children’s feast next day to save her mother’s time, for Randolph had begged mamma to shop a little with him. And then—was it provoking? the tide made the steamer’s start imperative half an hour earlier. She stood on the pier and met them as they came off.

“Aren’t you kind of captious about Sherburne?” Randolph inquired.

“Why—what have I said?”

“It’s what you haven’t said. You give your lip a little curl when he is praised, and—why you did not quarrel a bit last evening. That was queer, too.”

“I’ve grown good-tempered and he amiable. We are no longer a couple of children.”

"I think it was more fun when you quarreled," said Reese.

Honor laughed gayly.

The weeks were all too short. There was a most enjoyable visit to Sherburne, and Lyndell recalled the time the young cadet Archer Stanwood had come down, the first cousin beside Millicent Beaumanoir that she had liked. And here was a new Milly and Della in the old house, who were wild over Cousin Randolph. Dr. Underwood was enthusiastic about his hospital where he employed a young doctor and had a system of training for nurses; Aunt Fanny was growing stout, but she was bright and merry as she had never been in her girlhood, and her little flock adored her. Uncle Beaumanoir was getting quite feeble.

They were all so proud of Sherburne that it almost angered Honor. As if she cared. And when the soft sweet light came in his mother's eyes at the mention of his name, Honor swallowed over a lump in her throat and could not imagine why it should come there.

Tessy spoke of the future, of the time Sherburne should be married, of a new family, real Sherburnes growing up in the old house.

"But—do you never feel afraid that his wife may not be—what shall I say—sympathetic?" asked Lyndell.

"We talk of the time I came here, and believe all will go right. We shall make *her* welcome and love her. I am quite sure we will approve of his choice."

"It's a grand old house," declared Randolph. "I do believe if I was a girl I'd fall in love with Sherburne, a good deal on his own account and the rest for the sake of the place."

Mrs. Dr. Burke insisted upon a visit from them all, and Boston was delightful even in summer. Ray made

a charming wife and hostess. The uncle was a rather small and very delicate old man, quite unlike their grand old patriarch, but he thought "my nephew's wife" was one of the sweetest of women.

The cadet's furlough was over and he had to return to duty. A fortnight later Honor went her way, and the household circle seemed very small.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME FINE FORCES.

THERE had been many graduates in June, there were many new girls in September, eager, curious, ambitious, and some full of overweening vanity that soon sank out of sight under unmerciful snubs. Miss Losee was Honor's room-mate again, but there was a perceptible change in her. From being one of the jolliest girls she indulged in fits of depression. She even questioned the good of a college course.

They laughed a little about Annie North's marriage.

"Of course she knows enough to live out in a wilderness with flocks and herds. She'll forget her Latin and her French, she may have to talk German or Swedish or Polish to hired men and maids, but I suppose she will be happy with the man of her choice. It comes to that in the end with most of us."

"Being happy?" Honor glanced up. The tone had been rather complaining.

"Why if you get the man you want—love."

"I haven't gone so far as that."

"Actually? Wasn't there any one all the long vacation?"

"We buzzed around my brother like a lot of bees. We took three journeys—to mamma's old home, to Boston, and to see a newly-married cousin at Highland Park, then to Niagara. After that clothes."

"My summer wasn't as entertaining as that. O dear, seeing your brother was almost as good as going to West

Point. Did he talk much about—I can't recall all the fellows we saw," knitting her brow as if she was making an effort.

"He is a third-class man now, you know. He has two or three chums who have kept together all the time—that he likes very much. And some of the fourth-class who will pass next year. He wants us all to come up. And my Cousin Hope Drayton, a very extremely pretty girl, is anxious to go. She was very much taken with cadet buttons, and chevrons, and all the paraphernalia."

"As we were," with a laugh. "Will you go, think? Is there any one in particular ——"

If Honor had looked up she would have seen a soft flush stealing over her companion's face.

"Well"—indifferently—"he has a friend among the graduates—I think we saw him but I couldn't quite recall him. There were such swarms of them."

"What was his name?"

"Westerfield. Olin Adams Westerfield."

Agatha bent her head over some exercises in trigonometry. What a mercy Honor was not watching her!

"Any one else?" rather huskily.

"O, yes. But he does care a great deal about Mr. Westerfield. You see he was very good to Randolph in his first bad year. Some of the fellows are what I should call regular brutes. But Westerfield was always a gentleman."

"He went to Fort Clinton with us. And he was at the hop. Yes, I danced with him. And he was at the tea. Why he walked down to the station with us."

"Now, I never remembered all that. He must have made quite an impression on your mind. Randolph

wishes they were in the same class so they could have next year together."

"Why, that would be nice."

"Don't bother me any more about your old cadets!" said Honor in a mandatory, yet rather humorous tone.

"Hard study is a kind of bore."

"And we must bore our way through all the intricacies."

A fortnight later Honor had a letter from her brother.

"Do you remember that we were talking about Mr. Westerfield?" she asked with sudden eagerness. "Here is nearly a page about him in Randolph's letter. Why, they must be tremendously chummy. Read it."

Agatha took the epistle. Honor was rearranging her hair and putting on a fresh waist for dinner, going back and forth in little steps.

"How is that for young men's friendship?"

"Your brother is very enthusiastic. But I do suppose Mr. Westerfield deserves it."

"I wonder if we are as good to each other as men sometimes are," Honor remarked, musingly.

There were some duties towards each other, mamma had inculcated them from childhood. But an enthusiastic friendship.—The first half of the first year she was quite in love with Annie North, last year she had found her tiresome. Agatha was bright, cordial, generous on certain lines, but she had no especial aims. There were girls with aims, some of them with so much self-consciousness that they were disagreeable. There were two charming, friendly teachers, but Honor never felt quite sure of any individual preference. She did not understand that she was reaching out to what belonged to growth and development, that she was laying aside the girlish wrappings and getting to the real heart of woman-

hood. What she meant to do with life was a question that pressed upon her urgently at times. Then she longed for home and her mother.

The bell rang. Agatha laid down the letter and pulled her fair hair about a little, tied a big soft mull bow under her chin, and the two went down to dinner.

There was a delightful evening in Miss Mainwaring's room, and a talk about Rome. That seemed cold and far away to Honor. She wished it had been Holland instead.

And now all was hurry and confusion and joy again, the girls who lived near enough going home to Christmas holidays.

"I begin to think you are going the way of Annie North," Honor said sharply to her friend. "You have fallen awfully behind."

"Yes. I am ashamed of myself. But no one has asked me to go out on a ranch—or anywhere else. I am going to spend the whole vacation catching up. For I *must* get into the senior class next June, and I *must* graduate a year from that time. Papa is inexorable."

Honor thought home had never been so dear and comforting. Everything was going on well. Florence was a tall girl, a sweet mother girl with a hundred quaint fancies. Reese was doing finely. In his leisure he found some time to read up with grandpapa. Millicent's letters were enthusiastic with travel sketches, brilliant enough for a book. Mrs. Henderson had lost none of her charm. Ruth Ensign was engaged to Mr. Howe, but Margaret Phillips said it was half-heartedly, since she hated to leave Mrs. Kenneth.

"There will be another sweet old lady to care for, Mrs. Howe," said Margaret. "And Ruth will make such a perfect clergyman's wife it would be a shame for

her not to accept, when she really is in love with him. It would make mamma very unhappy to stand in the way."

Aunt Violet sent Honor a most cordial letter asking her to spend a week with them. Daisy had delighted her father's heart by taking a prize for a Christmas card. The son was in Harvard. Presently they were going to Paris to have a visit with Pearl, and they contemplated spending a year abroad.

"Why, you might go for three or four days," said her mother, though she hated to give her up. Her brightness was like sunshine in the house, and Reese kept her telling college stories. She was on the basket ball team, she was in a debating society, she belonged to a social club that gave afternoon teas.

"I almost wonder where you put in your lessons," said Lyndell with a tender smile as she surveyed the rosy, dimpled face.

"Like Randolph last summer, I want a home time. I can't think of gadding about after strange gods. I want to be where I can see you every day, you dear blessed mother!"

Dell clasped her to her bosom. Her outspoken ways and demonstrations were a continual delight. Had Millicent grown warmer natured in a husband's love, she wondered? At first she had been very proud of his tender care and attentions, his devotion to her and his mother, latterly she had not been so enthusiastic. Some of her letters were like a vivid chapter out of a book of travels.

Honor had another reason for not making the visit. She did not want to see Cousin Edward Sherburne. She felt secretly mortified over the incident that looked to her now not only foolish but despicable. They all knew —

everybody knew that mamma never had a moment's regret about Sherburne House. She could not have lived there without narrowing and spoiling papa's life, and so many more family traditions clustered about the Beaumanoirs. But if she had not made that shameful speech ! It brought the quick blood to her cheek even now. Of course it would make him angry, she was paying back old scores when she uttered such a heresy, but she had hurt him too, and lowered herself in her own estimation. Would she ever be brave enough to admit it ? His anger was amusing at first, but now she did not like the thought of this ostracism. Still she had not courage enough to subject herself to his triumph.

There was a delightful Christmas feast at the Draytons, when all of the clan were called together. Then there was Hope's charming birthday party.

Nora Mallory brought her a beautiful gift. Hope adored Nora and the merry children.

"I realize more and more how lonely you and papa would have been without Hope and Carew," Nora exclaimed. "And do you remember the dreadful temper I went into because Hope came ? I wonder how papa could have been so wise and so patient ! Where did I get so much jealousy and anger from ? Not from mamma, surely."

"It was in the Sherburne blood, nevertheless," declared Lyndell. "A part of heredity, and a good argument. I went into a tempest when I was a little girl because your mother had a lover. I wanted her all for myself."

Nora laughed with a winsome heartiness. Auntie Dell in a dreadful temper at such an occurrence ! "You must have loved mamma very much."

"Indeed I did," said Lyndell, flushing with old remembrances.

What a lovely life Hope Drayton was having. Her mother's friend and companion, her father's idol. She wouldn't change her father for any one in the world, but Uncle Drayton had so much leisure and was always finding new pictures and artists and authors and travelers and all manner of charming people. Hope's life was rich and full, and she was making it pleasant for many others. She did not feel anxious for a career, she was satisfied with being a delightful, affectionate daughter.

"My dear"—began Lyndell one morning—"I am afraid you are growing a little homesick beforehand. You were not your merry self yesterday."

She looked at her with warm affection in her lovely brown eyes, the tenderness of motherhood.

"I've been considering, mamma, whether it was not pure selfishness in me to want to go to college when I had no real aim or purpose. To be sure Milly wasn't married and I had a fancy she never would be. And now I do really hate to go away and leave you. Florence is too young to be much more than a pet, and she is still papa's baby."

"But you do not want to give it up?" exclaimed her mother in a startled voice.

"O no, I have still some ambitions left. But I never realized how charming and engrossing home life really was. Perhaps if I was going to be a professional and had a career marked out I might feel more ambitious. And teaching is discouraging work. There are so many girls whom you cannot inspire. There are girls continually studying how they can thwart and annoy teachers. Of course there are many nice students as well. And the hope of being a college president, or a noted lecturer or specialist in any line is quite a tempting outlook. But I am afraid I shall never reach that dignity,"

with a soft laugh. "And there are a good many girls who must depend upon their own exertions for their living and perhaps that of others. As papa says it is wicked to crowd them out when you have no need."

"Then I may have my girl back again," and the joy in the mother's eyes was a delicious satisfaction to the daughter.

"And you will be glad? You won't think I was weaker than the thing I undertook to do? That sounds Carlyle-ish—I think he said something like it. You see I am not aflush with original ideas," and a pretty color fluttered over her face, nestling in the dimples the smile made.

"Did you have grand dreams? Most girls do."

"Some girls, mamma. I thought all college girls lived in a kind of rarified atmosphere, but I find they are a good deal like the rest of the world. It's a sort of fashion to be proud of hailing from this or that college, even if you only squeeze through. I do not believe men feel as proud of referring to the fact."

"It is good to have this experience, this knowledge that the world is pretty much alike all over. I find things that puzzled me in my girlhood repeated under such different circumstances and with such dissimilar people. It is your own experience that is so new, and sometimes thrilling."

"You have not narrowed, mamma," Honor said rather tentatively.

"My dear, life has been very full and rich to me. And even your house, your books, your family cares, your duty towards your friends, your acquaintances, those in trouble, all hold immeasurable sources of improvement. No kind of living need be narrow or dull if the soul is in true earnest and in accord with God's

purposes. The duty towards God and the duty to one's neighbor comprises it all, but a lovely home with wide-spreading influences must always be a woman's best work."

Dr. Carew had sent the carriage for his wife as he wished her to see a peculiar patient of his that he was in some doubt about.

"Meanwhile," interposed Honor, "I will run around to Aunt Millicent's. She has been making out a list of books for me."

Lyndell kissed her daughter fondly. It was delightful to have her confidence whether the matters were trivial or weighty. And Honor thrilled all through her nerves with this sense of nearness.

Hope Drayton was in the music room training two girls who were to sing a duet at a coming entertainment at a Girls' Club. Aunt Millicent had two distinguished looking visitors in the library and they seemed to be engrossed in some important subject.

"O, Honor," she exclaimed with her greeting, "run up to the sitting-room. There is some one you will be very glad to see."

Honor tripped up the stairs. A great bowl of carnations stood on a table by the hall window, flanked by the green of two palms and making the air spicily fragrant. Some one was half buried in the Morris chair, and she went clear around and faced him before she saw who it was.

Edward Sherburne straightened himself up too much surprised to do anything but stare. Honor stood perfectly still, transfixed.

Since last summer she had known that some time she would apologize for her rude and hateful speech. She had never known just what to say in writing. She could

not tell now. His bright look grew colder. He made no move, not even stretching out his hand. She had given the offense, she must make the amendment quite by herself. He was very obstinate, but she had been so as well. She could feel her face blazing in scarlet as if it would scorch her.

“I did not know you were here!” The words came out with a gasp, and Honor half turned in a cowardly fashion. Yes, it was cowardly and it was not her wont to be that. She straightened herself suddenly, she stepped forward. Her eyes were mistily softened, the wound to her pride was so great, and her face was still like the reddest rose.

“I owe you some amends,” she began rather tremulously. “I said a mean, uncalled for, ungenerous thing to you about Sherburne House, and I have been heartily ashamed of it, and sorry for it ever since, growing more and more sorry as time went on. I don’t wonder you were very angry. I——”

Sherburne sprang up and caught both hands in his. There were real tears in her eyes and he could see the effort she was making that they should not overflow.

“Honor—yes it was uncalled for and you could hardly have given me a deeper wound. You can guess how it has rankled! But I don’t wonder you wanted to strike back with the sharpest weapon you could find, for I had tormented you beyond endurance. And I know, my dear cousin, not one of you envy me Sherburne House. It would be no manner of use to Randolph. Millicent has had fortune showered upon her—Reese’s interests will be right here in the city. I do not think any of you can understand the love we Virginians have for old places and family traditions, and all that,”—pausing.

“No one does envy you. And mamma has always

been so happy over it, and to think you are to carry on her dear father's name gives her unqualified joy. And if you will ——”

“Forget it !” He smiled a little, drew her closer and kissed her. “I suppose I ought to have been magnanimous enough to make the first overture.”

“I gave the dreadful offense,” smiling and looking up shyly ; with charming candor in her eyes.

“And you were so proud and wilful last summer ! Honor, if you had so much as held out your hand, I should have taken it with secret joy, even if rather loftily then. Would you like to know what I was thinking about when you came in ?”

“Yes ;” her lips a quiver with half suppressed fun.

“Whether I should have the courage to run over for a few moments. I came up to consult an eminent legal light on a very important matter we did not like to trust to writing. He gives me his opinion at two, and at three I start for home. Just as I was well under way with Aunt Milly, some one came to her on pressing business. And then I thought of Auntie Dell—and you ——”

“And you are not angry ——”

He still had hold of her hands, swinging them gently in a boyish fashion.

“I think you have a lot of things to feel stuffy over. I did torment you and made myself a nuisance generally, when I ought to have been admiringly amiable to your friends.”

“Then they would have fallen in love with you, and there would have been the trouble of falling out again. Girls can say such a lot of silly things when they are a little smitten with a young man, and it sounds quite ridiculous to the one who listens and is asked for opinions.”

“What—sensible college girls ?”

“I know you don’t like college girls ——”

“Come and let us argue it out.” He dropped down into the chair again, and seated her on the broad arm, so that he could have her face at his command. Had she grown prettier? She was so sparkling, so piquant, and the delicious pink kept fluttering over her from the waves of her hair to the tip of her chin.

“I do approve of education for women. I don’t like the strong masculine women who seem to think the force of manner with which they throw an argument at you is the strength of the argument itself. And it seems to me —this is an old-fashioned idea I know, that young men ought to be manly and strong and deferential to women, and fit themselves to take care of some woman, to love her, to be her husband and the head of a home. But the women crowd in and earn the money, and the men find so little to do that presently they are content to hang on their fathers until they find a rich girl to marry. It is bad for the men. But when you meet the lovely and refined women in Washington, who can entertain a foreigner with the grace of a French woman, the vivacity of the Spanish or the elegance of the Russian, you know it must take training to do it.”

Honor studied him in surprise and he flushed under the scrutiny. Then laughing a little uneasily he said —

“I know I haven’t had much to boast of. I’ve had a good deal of vanity and dogmatism and love of teasing, and—yes, I think I was nettled at West Point that you should all run after shoulder straps and chevrons and stripes down the sides of trousers and buttons and belt clasps, no matter what sort of a cub wore them ——”

“But we picked out the very nicest cubs,” she interrupted laughingly. “And it was so delightful to have them glad to see us and ready to offer every little

politeness and attention, and hover about you as if you had just come down from the moon, all the while they knew and you knew that it was not going to last, but was just a day or two of diversion."

"Which they were going to offer to the next relay of girls," he appended in something of his old tone.

"As you do in society. Aren't you charming and lovely and fascinating at Mrs. Somebody's reception, and doing it all over somewhere else? And the poor cadets have only a summer chance, while you civilians can take the whole year round."

Well—of course one wouldn't blame the poor fellows he thought. And the little uncertainty about girls was fascinating.

"No, you were not overamiable," she continued with enchanting demureness. "And I've something of the Sherburne temper. I wonder how long we will remain friends?"

"I never quarrel with any one but you. O there's a delightful old bit of poetry —

" 'When we invite our best friends to a feast
'Tis not all sweetness that we set before them,
There's somewhat sharp, and salt, both to whet appetite
And make them taste their wine well.' "

Sherburne glanced up with a half mischief in his eyes.

"Well—we have the sharp and salt," she returned.

"And now we have forgiven each other old scores?"

"O yes. And have grown wiser and better."

"And are to be friends?"

"Shall I ask the largest sacrifice you can make? Will you come to my graduation?"

He considered, "A year and a half. Yes, I think I will. What of the other girls?"

She told him of Annie North's marriage, and the many new friends she had made. Then Aunt Millicent came up and luncheon was announced. Afterwards he walked home with Honor and they had a gay, friendly time.

"Do you ever have time now to write letters?" he asked.

"O, once in awhile."

"Then I'll write to you," he said with his good-bye.

Honor wanted to tell her mother how hateful and silly she had been and her amends, but she really had not the courage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOVE AND LEARNING.

THERE had been a rather gay time the earlier part of the term, for the girls had not gotten over the Christmas merrymaking. What with teas, and the little dances and a play, the real work had to be put in when it could. Sometimes Honor had a great longing to throw it all up, with a feeling of yearning homesickness. But it would be a great shame when she was doing so well and had been complimented on her essays and her excellent French and German translations, and her articles for the college paper.

Agatha Losee had "caught up." But she had queer, almost moody spells now and then. Honor was a favorite with her class, with the seniors too, for that matter. But she laid her lack of ambition that was what she called it, to the fact that she had no definite aim. So many girls were planning out their lives, even to marrying. She would go home and be mamma's girl. Home began to look so delightful and satisfactory to her.

"There, I've won after the hardest of hard fights. I'm sure of the exams. I've gone over most of them with Miss Collins who is a gem, a trump, the noblest friend one ever had! And now my tongue is loosened. O Honor, I've such a long, long story to tell you."

Miss Losee threw herself on the floor beside Honor and laid her head on her knee, gave a frantic grasp at one hand.

"Have you gone crazy?" Honor's eyes were expressions of surprise.

"Well—I don't know but I have. I'm in love, and have leave to—to ——"

The face was scarlet, the mouth quivering.

"Why I thought you were to have no lovers," cried Honor in amaze.

"And I haven't had any real lover, only some one has loved me, and now papa has listened, and relented, but I can't be engaged until I have graduated. I had my way when he did not want me to come, now he has been having his way. What a silly goose I was to insist upon college! But I thought it was fine to be with crowds of girls and in societies, and have no end of fun and brightness sandwiched between the tough old studies. If I hadn't been an only child! And oh, if I hadn't come here and met you I should have missed it all, and the most splendid lover—oh I know he is going to be that!"

Honor sat up stiffly. "I haven't the slightest idea what you are talking about. The lemonade has gone to your head. Or perhaps it was the crackers. They're light as air."

Agatha raised her head. "Suppose I told you that handsome cousin of yours with the romantic story and fine old estate wanted to marry me, had never been able to get me out of his mind? Or—or your brother?"

"Agatha you are a ——"

What made Honor feel suddenly indignant?

"It is neither one. Ah, you wouldn't consent to have me for a sister-in-law? But Honor, you might do worse," and there was an indescribable pathos in the tone.

"Only you would be a couple of ninnies to begin thus early," and Honor laughed with light-heartedness. "Why we *all* liked you," she added.

“Then here’s to the story—‘drink it down.’ Do you remember Mr. Westerfield? He was with us a good deal.”

She asked it rather hesitatingly.

“Why that is Randolph’s *Fidus Achates*. O ——”

“Well, a year ago in May he wrote me a letter. A very fair, honorable one. For some cause or other he had not taken his vacation the summer before, and he begged me, if I had remembered him, and liked him well enough to accept a visit from him, to allow him to visit me during that time. There were other things ——”

The color went down her neck and up behind her ears.

“And you answered it. You are a wicked deceitful girl! Alas—for college discipline!”

“Yes, I answered it. It was wrong, I know. But I had to say something, or—or ——”

“Yes,” nodding with a smile of amusement.

“Then he wrote again. Of course I couldn’t carry on a clandestine correspondence, and I said so. I told him papa’s condition was that I should have no friendships and nothing to distract my studies the whole four years. And that if it pleased him he might come in July.”

“And he came?”

“When I reached home I gave papa his letters. They were nice manly letters and not full of boshy sentiment. Papa is a great advocate of marriage and he was sure when he made his condition that it would deter me from college, but I was heroically silly, and it didn’t. He stormed a good deal at first and said Mr. Westerfield shouldn’t come, and then he wrote him a note and allowed him to visit us. He and mamma liked him ever so much.”

“Oh, this was what Randolph and Mr. Westerfield were writing about last summer!” Honor smiled remembering it, and her brother’s enthusiastic letters since.

“And you are engaged?” she continued.

“Not a bit of it. We were not to write to each other all the year. Then papa would take it into consideration. And I was to finish my course and take my degree if it took me six years, before ——”

Honor understood the snatchy sentence and nodded.

“That was why I was so wretched in the autumn. A letter wouldn’t have hurt me at all. But your brother was so chatty.”

“You are a deceitful minx, to me your best friend.”

“There was nothing to tell, I wasn’t engaged, I wasn’t even allowed to think I had a lover. I couldn’t tell a lie to you”—breaking up her sentence with a short laugh.

“Of course not.” Honor assumed an air of high dignity.

“I wrote to papa I was very sure of passing, that I had taken private examinations in some studies. And Mr. Westerfield also wrote to him and mamma to beg them to come to the graduation exercises at West Point and the ball—and let me join them. And I am empowered to ask you in return for your lovely visit. O Honor, don’t say no, I’ve talked so much about you all that papa proposes to call on Dr. Carew when he comes to New York.”

She reached up and flung her arms about Honor’s neck, kissing her rapturously.

“You see,” she continued, “we shall only have such a little time. The exercises will come so close together. We shall have to hurry through ours, but we are not the heroes of this occasion. Wait until next year! Then it will be Lieutenant Westerfield’s turn to come and do me the honor.”

She sprang up then. “I’ll get you papa’s letter. I had to tell you all the story first. O Honor—but then

dear, you *will* come. Papa would be awfully disappointed."

Mr. Losee's letter evinced a good deal of admiration for his daughter's steady obedience of his commands. Mr. Westerfield's letter had been courteous and with just the right shade of deference. The Losees would be really gratified to visit West Point, and would spend a short time in New York. Agatha must send measurements for her ball gown and whatever else she wanted. And it would be a great pleasure and gratification to them if Miss Honor Carew would accompany them and be their guest, thereby giving them the opportunity to return a tithe of her kindness in affording Agatha such a delightful visit.

Honor looked grave.

"O you *can't* say no," the girl pleaded.

"I was thinking—next year they must all come and see me. I do wonder if the two will clash! And I will write at once to mamma. O, Agatha, I do hope you will be very happy!"

"I think I shall really deserve it if I wait another year. But the time *does* pass away."

"And there are a thousand things to do in the next ten days. There are two receptions, the one we give, the other we get. Then there's the Glee Club Concert, and the supper—and the examinations. Why does everything have to come together?"

"We'll get out of all we can. It won't be our funeral until next year, you know."

"You crazy thing, don't call it that."

"Well, we can skip some things now. We can't next year. White ball gown of course. O, I hope Lieutenant Westerfield will be able to come then."

"I must write at once to mamma. Then study,

exams. and everything. Now don't say another word to me. I know you are dying to talk over Mr. Westerfield, but I will put cotton in my ears and lash myself fast of the mast."

"You dear girl. Well, I won't play siren." She went off humming a Strauss waltz.

Honor felt quite distracted. Yes, it would be lovely to go to the Point again, next year she would have to give up the festivities. College was getting a sort of sacrifice to her, and yet she was proud of all she had won, and some splendid friends she had made.

When all the plans and the letters were in they found there would be just time and hardly an hour to spare. The girls would get home in the evening and start the next morning early. Even if Honor had been minded to give it up, Randolph's letter was so urgent, so full of joyful anticipations.

Mr. and Mrs. Losee had been overruled. They wanted to give a dinner at the hotel, but Mrs. Carew said the girls would be tired with their journey and feel more at ease at the doctor's. Which was true enough. Dinner was to be an hour later.

Dr. Carew went to the station for the girls. They did look tired after the work and excitement of the last ten days. But both had passed splendidly and were seniors with only one more year of toil.

"O papa, dear!" was all Honor could say. She felt so safe and full of delight.

Mrs. Losee was a rather small woman with the characteristic prettiness of calm middle age. Certainly her tall daughter had not been modeled on her lines, but resembled her father, and yet was quite unlike him in most attributes. If he had been a military man he would certainly have proved a martinet. But he seemed very glad

to see his daughter, though he called her a naughty girl and said she should have been sent to a convent instead of a college, and they would not have had all this fuss for her sake.

"Aunt Milly and Uncle Drayton with Hope went up yesterday. Hope was very anxious to go to the ball, and Randolph wanted to invite everybody. But we thought he had better wait for his turn."

"Only—I shall want you all to come to my commencement, and I do wonder what we shall do."

"Why I had hardly thought of that," returned her mother. "But we won't worry at what will happen a year hence."

Honor decided that Mrs. Losee was very sweet and amiable. Mr. Losee had quite a good deal to say about the folly of college educations that seldom did any real good. "If one was going to teach or enter any of the professions, it would be different. But plain every-day wives and mothers do not need Greek and Latin and so many isms. We are getting our lives too fine, too complicated. The man expects his education to help him along the best paths of life, to assist him in making a home and providing for wife and children. He turns it to some purpose. And it seems to me a useful education is best for the average woman. I do suppose girls are like boys, very few are above the average."

"But after all you sent Agatha," said Honor with smiling archness.

"I consented because her heart seemed set upon it. And last year she would have thrown it up in disgust. How many of your compeers, Miss Carew, have dropped out the first and second year?"

"Quite a number, to be sure. But many of them do not mean to stay more than two years. Then some of

them find out that they really have no vocation for learning, and they are wise to give it up. They tell a story of a girl who was ambitious to take a degree and worked hard for two years over things she positively hated. She could trim hats and bonnets to perfection. So she went at that instead, and now every summer goes abroad for her firm and is doing some exquisite painting beside, had a flower piece in the water color exhibition that sold at once. So she learned what she could not do, and what she could, by going to college."

"But most of you, I take it, rather hanker after marriage and homes of your own. That is right and natural. I have no faith in a woman who pretends to hold herself above marriage. But now you want some one who can enliven your leisure hours by reading everything in the original, and can quote from Shelly and Rossetti and the Rubaiyat, and don't know anything about Cowper or Young or Pope. Think of darning stockings to the rhythm of Latin hexameters."

"There's a little sort of machine that darns stockings, I believe. And men are inventing machines for doing men's work, so why shouldn't we have something to simplify ours. And now women join and make homes, and sometimes adopt poor orphan children," declared Honor in a little triumph.

"And then run after a lot of young fellows with shoulder straps and gilt buttons." Mr. Losee threw back his head and laughed. "We will go and see how much education and training do for the young men, whether it will fit them for the women. The commonplace men will not answer any more."

"Mr. Losee is not half in earnest," said his wife apologetically when they had gone to the drawing-room. "He likes to tease the girls. And he finds out in his

business how much misplaced education there is. If they could be educated for what they *must* do in this world, rather than the things they long to do and are not fitted for ! ”

Lyndell joined in this view. She had seen so much of it herself. But who could tell just what one would be called to do ?

“ The girls must go to bed early,” she said presently. “ We shall keep Agatha all night. She will feel more at home here.”

“ You are delightfully friendly, Mrs. Carew,” Mr. Losee exclaimed with appreciative heartiness. “ And perhaps we cannot do a more courteous thing than to return to our hotel, seeing that we must start early in the morning. Again allow me to thank you for the pleasure you have given our daughter.”

Reese did not care to go. He would rather wait until it came Randolph’s graduation.

“ I don’t know how we will ever manage,” said Honor with rather amusing perplexity. “ I shall want you all to see me distinguish myself.”

“ You and Randolph seem to have the twinship of it,” he returned with a light laugh.

Mr. Losee seated the ladies in the train, but took possession of Honor himself. She was not quite sure that she enjoyed his carping manner, though he punctuated it with such gleams of humor in the wrinkles he made in the lines of his face and the twinkles in his eyes, that she felt there was no real bitterness in it.

“ What am I to do with my girl, Miss Carew ? ” he asked as they were speeding along.

Honor flushed, glanced up encountering the sharp eyes, then hers were downcast.

“ Is that the way college girls keep promises ? ”

with a rather malicious significance, tempered by the smile.

"That cannot justly be laid to the college. We have no young men there," she answered archly.

"But *you* are answerable for the temptation."

"I ——" Honor was covered with confusion.

"You took her up there," nodding his head. "And she saw attractive gold lace, shoulder straps, flashing swords and all the military paraphernalia that fills a young woman's head with the romance of courage and prowess, and impossible heroism."

"But no one fell in love with me," said Honor with an inimitable, deprecating grace.

"O, you will not be allowed to escape that way. I do not consider Agatha especially weak-minded, do you?"

"Indeed she is not," with eager enthusiasm.

"Or are you especially hard-hearted?"

She laughed at that.

"When Agatha went to college—quite against my wish, but she and her mother thought the world was whirling on so fast a girl must do something to keep up with it, I said, 'No lovers, miss, no time to be spent philandering round, no gay toggery and society entertainments. If you must know all about Horace and Livy and Theocritus and a hundred other dead and gone people and fill your head with higher mathematics and all that, there must be no admirers to disturb the rarefied atmosphere until you are through. And you'll stay until you graduate, if it takes ten years.'"

"O, but it will not," cried Honor in vivacious protest. "You can't think what she has done this winter. She came off with flying colors in all the exams. She is sure to graduate."

"Now explain to me the sense of all this fine educa-

tion and waste of money, when she chooses to go out to Western wilds and give up the pleasures of civilization for a man's sake. You don't for a moment suppose they are going to pore over Latin and French and dig tough roots out of Euclid, and discuss the advantages of the higher education of women in some fort life or tent life, where they have to comfort each other for all they have given up?"

Honor laughed softly at the picture that his tone made vivid.

"So you see the old story goes on. Love steps in and plays havoc with plans. What you all want is the training for good wives and mothers, to bring out the qualities that help yourselves and others over the rough places in life, and to make the days bright and pleasant and uplifting, to take the common little events and make them beautiful and attractive and comforting—yes, and happy."

"But doesn't education do a good deal of that—teaching you the best ways of working for the world?"

"Miss Carew, suppose one-half of the world woke up some morning and said—'I shall make one human being happy before I sleep,' what do you suppose would be the result?"

He laughed in an abrupt masculine fashion.

"You can make two people very happy, Mr. Losee," Honor said with delightful audacity.

He nodded. "I've strayed from my text. But you see your college discipline and high ennobling truths have not kept my girl in the straight path of—well I can't say she actually promised not to fall in love, so we can't call it truth, and since love is a woman's destiny we can't call it duty. I'm not up in logic or casuistry. But she accepted my terms, and hasn't kept to the letter. And if I keep to mine I shall be a cruel parent——"

"She will not ask any indulgence. She is coming back to college and going through her course. She may not feel quite so much interest in the societies and the entertainments, and the things girls have to get up so as to preserve a sort of equilibrium. And she will wait patiently. You will see."

"You have great faith. After all these interviews with the young man, and listening to his persuasive tongue!"

"That's the discipline you get out of your college training." She had her triumph now, and she raised her eyes with an exultant light.

"You have no lover, Miss Carew?" The tone rendered the question ordinary and not impertinent.

"O no."

"I don't know how you will stand a year of enthusiastic praises of a young fellow you care nothing about, of sorrowful longing, of impatience and chafing at resistance to another person's will. For—somehow I feel I must keep my word."

"A year isn't a lifetime."

They were coming into the station. The whole place seemed in glittering array, under the brightest of skies. Throngs of visitors could not hide the marching and countermarching, the groups of officers of past times and more than one of famous remembrance. It was a vivid, brilliant picture.

They found the Draytons on the lookout for them; Randolph was with them. Mr. Losee looked the fine young fellow all over. They were just in time for the grand parade. He was one of the officers of the day in his company, and he had but a moment. He led them to an advantageous point for sight-seeing.

"Westerfield passed splendidly," he whispered to

Honor. "Funny, isn't it that they two unlikely people should fall in love. He is a first-class man in every respect; the best friend I've made here, though there are lots of fine men when you get to know them. You'll go to see the sham battle this afternoon. It will be grand."

"I don't see how you can fight when you're not in earnest."

"But we are desperately, dreadfully, fiercely so! Addio," and he almost flew over the ground to rejoin his company.

The bands were doing their utmost and the air throbbed with melody. Mr. Losee caught the spirit of enthusiasm and his shrewd eyes kindled.

"I wonder if we shall ever need them?" he said musingly. "The navy seems to settle most of our difficulties of a foreign nature, and occasionally a strike calls for sharp remedy. We discuss possible wars, but peace seems the general watchword. Still it is splendid to see such training and enthusiasm as that."

Agatha strained her eyes for a familiar face in vain. Her father hardly wondered that her fancy had been caught by military ardor and brilliancy. Yet how did it happen that a young fellow amid this crowd of visitors and hosts of pretty girls should be able to single out one and remember her for months with no sign from her to go upon. In spite of himself he began to have an admiration for Lieutenant Westerfield.

They marched and countermarched and went through wonderful evolutions. The throng of visitors changed about also, and Agatha wondered if any one could ever be found.

"We had better go to the hotel," said Mr. Drayton. "You must all be tired, and luncheon will not come amiss. I engaged your rooms."

Just as they reached it Randolph and Lieutenant Westerfield in all the glory of his new trappings met them. He flushed under the heat and sunburn, but there was an elation shining in his eyes, for he knew his cause was nearly won.

"We have just fifteen minutes," exclaimed Randolph. "Were you ever in such a crowd? There are some Educational Associations, and two big excursions. We seem to be the show place of the country."

"And a splendid show you make," exclaimed Hope Drayton. "I never imagined it was half so beautiful or grand," her eyes kindling with enthusiasm.

"I'll find some one to take you about a little. Honor has seen most of it. O, I say, Honor," lowering his voice to her ear alone — "I was so afraid some of you would ask Sherburne up. He was such a marplot last time."

"I think he has improved," in a rather deprecating tone. "He was very nice when I saw him at Christmas."

"Mercy knows there was room enough for it! Six months' training among the 'plebes' would have done him a world of good."

Honor shrank at the thought. That elegant, fastidious society gentleman subjected to such treatment! It had not injured Lieutenant Westerfield any, and improved Randolph immeasurably.

"Don't you think Westerfield will be all right? Mr. Losee is a sharp looking person that you do not want to run up against too often, but after all, Miss Agatha is his only daughter. How beautiful Hope is! Everybody will go down to her at the ball to-morrow night. O, *do* you remember the hop? That was a great thing to me!"

Lieutenant Westerfield was doing the amiable to Mr. and Mrs. Losee, while Agatha stood by with a demure-

ness rather foreign to her character and which suggested her being on very excellent, trained behavior. There would be no chance to say a word all the afternoon, but the evening ——

“It is almost full moon,” said the lieutenant. “Everything looks wonderful in the moonlight—you would hardly believe it. I shall be at liberty and quite at your service,” bowing.

They had luncheon and a little rest, then took their way to the battle-ground, accompanied by two portly officers who explained everything. Major Reynolds was at once attracted towards Agatha. They found a tolerably good place on an elevation. Infantry, cavalry with yellow stripes and warlike accoutrements, mountain pack artillery, a line of scouts, everything and everybody bristling in warlike array.

They watched breathlessly. Agatha knew she would be on the winning side, a little bird had whispered it to her. It was evident the “enemy” meant to make it a hard-won victory. Disabled men were lying about or being carried off the field. The rattle and roar and shouting were tremendous. At intervals the atmosphere was so full of gray-blue smoke with the deeper denser shadings, that both sides seemed lost.

They wavered, returned to the attack, went through skilful manoeuvres, but at last one side weakened irremediably, and the day was lost.

“It was splendid!” cried Agatha with a long, delicious sigh through the smiles. “When you know there is no death in it, and no real hatred, no danger, but only just a test of courage and training ——”

“I never should want to see a real battle,” said Hope in a low, half-frightened tone. “O, Honor, what if Randolph had to go away to a real war!”

“There is not going to be any real war,” returned Agatha lightly. “Everybody knows we are a peaceful nation.”

“But the Indian skirmishes are sometimes fatal,” exclaimed Honor.

“People die everywhere,” was Agatha’s comment.

Everybody had a certain enthusiasm and the spectators thought it a brilliant action. The older officers criticized with experience and perhaps a little carping. The throng dispersed, some to take homeward trains, others to hotels, and not a few of the younger people lingered under the magnificent elms and watched the glowing sun and the golden waves that by degrees came to softer tints, pinks and grays, orange and duns, leaving a line of black shading about the woodlands opposite.

They were all tired and excited and made themselves ready for dinner rather languidly.

Randolph ran in. “I’ve only come to say that if you like to go out for a walk this evening,—and some of the cadets will be glad to renew their acquaintance with you, Honor, and Miss Losee. Everybody will be out ——”

“How splendid the charges were!” cried Agatha. “Are you sure no one was really wounded? Why, I think it is a great deal more interesting than our first visit.”

“A few were rather disabled—but then so they are at a football game,” he laughed. “Be ready, everybody.”

“You have a fine son, Mrs. Carew,” said Mr. Losee.

Lyndell smiled. She was wondering if she could give him up as sons and husbands were given up in the civil war, as wives and mothers were continually doing in the old countries. O, would there ever be a reign of world-wide peace?

CHAPTER XIX.

THROUGH YOUNG EYES.

LIEUTENANT FORBES came to pay his respects to the ladies. Next week he was to go to the northwest. And there were several of the fourth-class men who had been yearlings with Randolph, tall, fine looking, soldierly fellows. Prescott had graduated with Westersfield.

"To-morrow night we shall be in our glory," he began gaily. "The old fellows are nowhere, they have to look on and gnaw their mustachios with envy. Only—I am sorry it is through with—I should like to be set back two years."

"And not go to the foundation?" Honor asked in a tone of deliciously assumed surprise.

He shrugged his shoulders and gave his lips a funny little curl, while his eyes gleamed in a rather humorous negative. "No. It's not a bad discipline either. You get a pretty true estimate of yourself in the end. The one experience suffices. Only"—lowering his voice, "I think it would be good for some of the old fellows to undergo it a second time."

Dell was tired but she thought it best not to thrust the whole supervision of the young people on Mr. and Mrs. Losee. And Honor had said, "Of course you will come, mamma."

The walks were all so lovely in the soft moonlight that it was difficult to make a choice. Every place was thronged with visitors. There were several points the

Losees were anxious to view, although the gentleman admitted one might spend a month and not see all the wonders. He was so interested. Everything was on a much grander and more intelligent scale than he had ever imagined. The romance of the Hudson appealed to him and found a most enthusiastic translator in Randolph who was really convoying the party, and planning to give Lieutenant Westerfield chances.

The younger group changed about, there were four masculines to the three girls. When her admirer came around to her side Agatha felt awkward and embarrassed. Whether her father would consent to an engagement, whether she had any real right to enjoy these glances of adoration and little half sentences meaning so much, that set every pulse a tremble and filled her with an uncomprehended agitation that wished him away at one moment and was wildly glad of him the next. Her daring and coquetry seemed to have deserted her.

They could have lingered till midnight, but the cadets still owed their country some duty, whether early to bed would make them wise or not. But to-morrow night there would be indulgence enough.

The others remained out later. Lieutenant Forbes found some seats for them.

"O, Cousin Honor, it is simply magnificent," said Hope. "Of course few of the candidates know *just* what it is—though I *do* suppose some of them have made excursions up here. I don't wonder at Randolph's choice now. And what a fine looking soldier he makes. Do you girls have as much enthusiasm about your college?"

"Some do—yes, a good many. Yet I believe," laughing a little, "the most enthusiastic ones get—what shall I say—commonplace the soonest. You see—girls are pretty much the same all the world over."

Honor flushed sitting there in the moonlight. Had she grown commonplace? Last year she had been class president, the year before she had had honors thrust upon her beside her name. What it would be next year —

“No, it isn’t at all like this. I think one difference is the purpose, and the feeling that you belong to the country, that you have a duty towards her. There are ambitious girls meaning to teach and who hope to be college professors. If you could always teach the splendid ambitious girls! Then others intend to study a profession. And some go for the fun and frolic of the thing and have all the amusement they can get out of it, caring little whether they graduate or not.”

“I can’t imagine any one being lovelier or broader or more intelligently delightful and sympathetic than mamma,” Hope said tentatively. “And she isn’t a college woman, but she reads French and Italian like a native and knows all the poets and is graceful and gracious and lovable and admired —”

Honor stopped short with a laugh that people often use to cover some deep feeling or secret dissatisfaction.

“I’m glad you didn’t want to go, Hope. There are many things you wouldn’t like. There are vulgar and self-conceited girls, there are women who have lost girlhood somehow, and who are hard and dogmatic. Well —there are a good many lovely girls, too, only—it isn’t all, nor half, romance.”

The music was still sounding in their ears, the trees quivered and made shadows in the moonlight. She leaned out of the window. It was enchanting, inspiring. Men, even the younger ones made splendid friendships. Randolph had never changed his regard for Mr. Westerfield, and it had been most generous on the elder’s part, always a class ahead, too.

There was an arm thrown over her shoulder.

"O dear!" said a half-crying, longing voice, "isn't it too bad to have the nice time spoiled! I don't know how it will be. One moment it looks fair and serene, the next it's all clouds and darkness. Papa *does* admire Lieutenant Westerfield,—I overheard him tell a gentleman. Then he says nasty captious little things to me."

"You are the one to wait, to give in, Agatha. You didn't quite keep your word."

"But I did not make any promises. I do not think I even said yes. And of course I'm going back. I shall graduate if I set up o' nights and get red rims around my eyes and grow lank and sallow. But you see—Olin doesn't know what to say, it's hard on him. He puts little squeezes in my hand and quotes poetry to me, so I know what he means, but it isn't like saying it right out. There is such an absolute deliciousness in thinking you are the only two people in the world and all the rest are shadows."

Honor could not forbear laughing.

"If he only would allow us to be engaged! And writing a letter once a month wouldn't take much time," Agatha pleaded.

"But it would go over and over in your mind a thousand times," said Honor severely.

"I'm so wretched!" in an appealing tone.

"Go to bed at once. You are tired and sleepy," commanded Honor.

"How can any one be so silly when it is only waiting," thought Honor. "And if college discipline doesn't do more than that for any one—— And if that is love ——"

But the morning was magnificent. The grounds were a dazzle of white and gray and gold and crimson and

yellow without the glitter, and such training and manners that every onlooker was fascinated. There were still many things and places to visit and Honor really wondered at the fine courtesy of the officers at many of the useless, almost impertinent questions.

But everything was eclipsed by the graduation ball. It had not been so fine for years, it was admitted on all sides. Many distinguished visitors were present, and sauntered around while the younger portion danced. Cards overflowed until no margins were left, although it seemed as if the room was full of diaphanous fairies, still there was not enough to go round. And how beautifully they danced. Hope spoke of that. She was really fascinated. As for Agatha Losee—she took her head and flirted, truly, desperately. Her father looked on in amazement. If so many men were eager for the smiles of his girl—among them no doubt some undesirable parties—perhaps he had better relent a little.

Honor did wish Edward Sherburne was there. Hope was so radiant, there were so many lovely girls—but if he turned off unamiable! Everybody was saying he had improved so much, and certainly he was charming in that little Christmas episode.

“This is one of the nights one wants a month long,” Agatha said with a tense breath of irrepressible delight. If love-making was tabooed, delight was not.

Dell and Mrs. Drayton had enjoyed it with unfeigned satisfaction. They had met several Southern officers, and there was much cordial conversation. It was a pleasure too, to see some of the famous men of other days, and some who were to be famous sooner than any one thought them.

They were to return the next morning. Randolph was sorry, but for the next fortnight he would be very

much engaged, and would hardly have an hour to devote to them.

"Then later in the season you can all come up again," he said. "The crowd will be over and there are so many things for Hope to see, and the rows on the river are magnificent. O yes, you must come up again. And next year this will all be done over in my behalf!"

He flushed with some manly pride as he caught the shining light in his mother's eyes.

"But I must gather them all up to do honor to me," interposed his sister. "It will be too bad. I can't give up all the glory, however."

His face shadowed a little. "I suppose I will have to yield to you," he answered gravely. "But the dates may be a little different."

To their great surprise Mr. Losee announced that he had engaged board until the following Monday. It was not at all likely he should ever have the same opportunity, as he did not come east often, and now that he was here he wanted to do the place thoroughly. It gave one a much more correct idea of what government was doing for the country, and the kind of young men who were being trained to fill the places as the elder ones dropped out. It broadened a man's ideas.

The others took the boat home and had a most entrancing sail.

"It broadens a girl's ideas, too," said Hope, with a joyous little laugh. "Soldiers, cadets I mean, are very fascinating. They enjoy everything in such a whole-hearted way. What a pity society young men generally seem so bored."

"These earn their pleasures," returned Auntie Dell. "They do not have a surfeit of them."

Honor mused over Agatha's almost hysterical joy. All would go right with her now.

Mr. Drayton had enjoyed it quite as much as the ladies. They were planning a journey to California. It had been some years since Reese Drayton had seen the pretty town that had grown out of his half-sanitarium idea, but once indeed since its start. It had prospered wonderfully. While in no sense a cooperative scheme, it held out a cordial and strengthening hand to the weak members of the great cities who were in earnest in chances to accept the opportunity of reformation, and were willing by industry and perseverance to earn homes of their own. He wanted to visit this work of his and Dr. Carew's brain and hands, and the Osborne cousins, Gifford Lepage, who had developed into a fine man, and had been a member of the state legislature. They tried to persuade Dell to join them.

"It is not so pleasant a time for a journey across the continent," Mr. Drayton said, "but we shall not return until autumn. We did not want to break into Carew's studies to go earlier, and then there was all this gayety Hope was anxious to share."

"It does seem too bad," declared Honor, "that we can't go next year, but I must have some glory, and I cannot run away this time. I've done it twice already. And next year I shall be part of the show, and I shall want you all."

They had a joyful welcome at home. Reese had passed with honors and was highly delighted, the doctor was eager to hear about Randolph.

"And he has grown absolutely handsome, or else it is the soldier trappings," said Honor. "Papa, he looks more and more like you;" smiling in a gratified fashion.

"Thank you, my dear." He kissed his daughter fondly.

"You are the best kind of handsome, noble within and without. I wouldn't change you for the most magnificent officer at West Point, and there are some splendid ones."

"I have no words to reply to that," and he bowed graciously.

"I do wonder where you would like to go, Honor?" her mother asked.

"Just nowhere at all. I want a taste of home life with you," she said. "But if you could spare Florence to go with Aunt Milly. Hope is so very fond of her."

"I am afraid she would be homesick. And next year we will all go. Your father will have earned a vacation. Honor, you don't know how much I am counting on you for a home daughter. I have sometimes quite envied Aunt Milly."

There was a suspicious softness in Honor's eyes, a gladness, too. She clasped her arms about her mother's neck and kissed her fondly. Lyndell felt she was growing deeper in her children's hearts. But the wanderer, she often mused over her and wondered. She could not have endured it she thought, if it had not been for the other mother, who loved her as if she had been of her own flesh.

The Losees came back with the young lieutenant in their train, who was to accompany them home and spend a short time while he was waiting for an appointment. There was some engineering work to be done in northern Michigan, and he had put in an application to be appointed on the corps.

Agatha was radiantly happy. Mr. Losee grumbled a little and called himself an old fool and weak-minded to be led about by a girl's whims. Mrs. Losee was proud of her son-in-law elect.

“But it is rather hard to be a modern mother,” she admitted confidentially to Mrs. Carew. “There were three of us girls at home, Jane was married at twenty. I was not quite eighteen. Mr. Losee lived in the neighborhood and I was engaged a year and a half while he was getting something together. It was a very happy time and mother took so much interest in us. I was twenty-two when I married, and Lucy was seventeen. James was between. Lucy was almost twenty-three when she was married; so all those years mother had a daughter at home. Agatha was at boarding-school a year, and now there’ll be four at college and then she will go away somewhere. Since she was seventeen I haven’t had any real good of her. One might almost as well be without children. One son is married, one is in South America, both are older than Agatha. And now I shall be left alone. If I could have had these four years!”

It did seem a sorrowful fact, hard to be borne. Suppose she had had only Millicent?

“Of course I shall graduate,” Agatha said to Honor. “If I had not gone to college and had that lovely visit with you and West Point and all, I shouldn’t have met Olin. Perhaps college deserves the credit of that. But what an awful bore it will be all next year, studying such a lot of things that you are going to forget in the real world. There’ll be the senior play and the procession and all the tiresome exercises—oh, I *do* hope I won’t be an honor girl, and the class supper and a thousand other doings at the last when you want to fly on the wings of the wind. Education in the things you will never use is throwing time away. There are more splendid purposes to life, indeed a lot of girls and women together get narrow, don’t you think so and opinionated, and all that?”

One really doesn't know what life truly is until one loves and takes all the sacredness of another's soul into one's keeping. And think what heroic stories of devotion we have read about women who had no education at all. O, grades, and wonderful translations that were rendered as well hundreds of years ago, and a bit of foolish verse and the essential purpose of the something or other will not make us as fine and broad and give us the lovely experience of life. So much of the talk about education is clear bosh. I think one reason why papa listened to my foolish wish for a college education was owing to what a friend said that in any reverse of fortune you could fall back upon your education. Think of me after fifteen years or so, with wrinkles round my eyes and hair turning white at the temples and having forgotten half I learned, trying to compete with the young girls fresh from the academic shades with all the new isms that were not taught in our day! We should be relegated to a back seat or advised to go out to some western hamlet where only the three R's were needed."

Agatha stopped to laugh and catch her breath; Honor remembered how enthusiastic she had been with all her fun and nonsense that first year. There were other instances where love had come along and put out the fires of ambition.

"Olin is very proud of me," she continued. "We are going to keep up in our French and German, and I mean to learn Spanish, it's such a pretty musical language, and we can talk that. He might go to Mexico some time, and many of the half breeds in California use Spanish. You can never tell quite where an army officer will be sent. But dear me, we shall have to spend the first two years in absolute courtship, for we've been deprived of all its sweetness and shall be another year, though I think we

will be able to write to each other. Honor, *do* say you're glad, don't look like a post."

Honor smiled. "I am glad of whatever makes you happy," she said in a tone of sweet sincerity.

"And I *do* hope you'll have a lover. You will not know anything about the real bliss of living until then. It's queer that your brother's dearest friend should not have taken the fancy to you. That is the way they do in books. Are you quite sure there isn't some one you are keeping yourself for? The young doctor who comes in here——"

"Nonsense!" returned Honor rather sharply. "I shall let lovers alone for a whole year yet."

"O, you wouldn't if somebody adored you way down to the ground, and said the loveliest things to you! We had such a splendid time coming down on the boat. And I hope Olin will not get his appointment under a whole month, for papa will go on liking him more and more. He just can't help it!"

Lieutenant Westerfield came to call and was the happy escort of the girls up to the park where they had a delightful luncheon and spent the afternoon over the pictures, though Honor studied them much more attentively than the lovers. Ned Beaumanoir had gone away, and the Kenneths, even the Murrays had flitted to a cottage on Long Island. Though Honor felt there was really no need of looking up diversion for Agatha.

After the Losees had gone Honor and her mother had some sweet, confidential times.

"I was very much taken with Agatha at first," she admitted. "She was so eager and ambitious and bright. All the girls liked her. Annie North liked me, and was half homesick. But as some one says there are very few friendships formed from election on both sides. This

year I've made some other friends, two in the graduating class that chose me, I think. Miss Gilbert is going to teach right here in the city and Miss Bradford, who was the class poet and writes exquisite little things, stories as well, has a position on a magazine and is to do some reading for a publishing house. I want her to know you and Aunt Milly. She is really splendid. As soon as she can she means to take a flat and bring her mother, and her sister who is incurably lame, and they will keep house together. She stands for some of the best element in college."

"I shall be glad to give her a warm welcome, dear," returned the mother.

"They have a little cottage in Connecticut, near the Sound and will stay there all the rest of the summer. They each have a small income. Isabel has spent hers on her education, but now she can make it up. She will be such a stranger that I know she will be glad enough to get acquainted with you."

"One's fancies change as one grows older," said Mrs. Carew with some gravity. "I am glad to have you take in wider views, and be able to appreciate girls of a different stamp. Although Agatha is very entertaining, and Mr. Losee is an intelligent, shrewd and well informed business man. I liked him much better than I supposed I should at first, with his queer dogmatisms. And Mrs. Losee should have had two or three daughters."

"And you are very glad to have me."

Honor smiled out of dewy eyes.

"More than glad, and thankful," with answering love in her own eyes. "And I want us to be the dearest of friends as time goes on. I hope you may be satisfied to be a home girl for a few years. I wonder if daughters realize how sweet companionship is to the mother."

“O mamma, I want to. Hope and Aunt Milly are so charming.”

Yes, this was a child for herself as she had said in the beginning. She had lost her grasp on Millicent some way, but Honor's frankness and simplicity had always gone straight to her heart.

She said now and then with a sigh “poor Millicent.” Why she did not know, but there was a mother's unerring misgiving. The outward life seemed full of pleasure. There had been delightful Honolulu with its beauty and wealth of flowers, there had been months of absolute, entertaining housekeeping in Japan. Then there had been the quaint old cities of China, and India, and there the elder Mrs. Henderson had met friends. After that the Holy Land—Egypt where Mr. Henderson had been ill for awhile, and then Millicent had expressed longings for her own people, a curious yearning that seemed like homesickness. Italy, the German cities, Spain for Mr. Henderson's health, the quaint old French towns full of history and marvelous incident; to crown all Paris.

“We hardly want to go away,” declared Honor. “There are so few of us and we have so much space. Then it is lovely to have time to think, to read and remember, and consider. We rush so at college—it is not all study either, games and pleasure and diversion. And here I can browse. That is such an expressive, leisurely word,” laughing a little. “The people who have to stay at home most of the year round are the ones who ought to go away; and the ones who have been away—why mamma, then you are entitled to the change!”

“It *is* a change for me. There are so few calls and entertainments and plans, and,” with a gesture that was at once amusing and relaxing, “clubs and societies. We must be doing for our fellow-creatures, or

life would become too selfish. But it is good to have the rest. You know we enjoyed a little of it last summer."

Reese had gone to Lake George to camp out. Dr. Carew was done with lectures and classes and devoted some of his time to home pleasures, enjoying his daughter immensely. They drove about the park, they read summer literature in prose and verse, they discussed their favorite heroes, they planned tours for the coming years. Lyndell listened and smiled. Florence prattled in the gay innocence of hardly outgrown childhood, so tenderly attractive to the mother. Now and then a sail up the Hudson or down the Jersey coast, a few days spent somewhere that made the quiet, restful home seem all the sweeter.

Honor was playing one evening for a few of Florence's friends who had been in to tea. Lyndell was in her room in a cool white gown, with a low light that gave a mysterious air to the room.

"O, you are alone! I am glad," exclaimed the doctor as he entered.

There was a troubled expression in his face.

"O, what has happened! Grandpapa ——"

The elder doctor had been rather ailing for a few days, but he was having a robust old age.

"Grandpapa is all right. Randolph too, I suppose," with a faint sort of smile.

"Then it is Millicent."

"Millicent is well and has improved beyond everything. I have a letter from Mrs. Henderson. I laid it down in the office just before I came to dinner, meaning to bring it home and forgot it. There were two rather perplexing cases when I went back. Then as soon as I had leisure I read it."

"From Mrs. Henderson?"

“Well she has written you know. I asked her to. She is always enthusiastic about Millicent. She loves her, that I cannot doubt. But it seems as if she had something to make up to her. Can you remember now how little either of them have said about Mr. Henderson? I wanted to know the nature of his illness while they were at Bombay, and again in Egypt, but there were no definite accounts. And now they are coming home as soon as he is able to travel.”

“Ill again?” in an apprehensive tone.

“Read the letter. And you will see they want a house, servants and everything. They are all tired of roaming and wish to be settled. She has written to the trustee, and we are to proceed at once. They will be home by the middle of September.”

Lyndell turned up the light and began to read. There was nothing especially alarming. Charlton had been very ill and was better, but his mother thought now that he ought to be under the steady care of a physician. They all wanted a home. Then followed directions as to the kind of house they desired, which they preferred to have quite up town, a detached house if possible, with some ground space, if old-fashioned there would be no objection if it could have all modern improvements. A lease of some years would be preferable. Mr. Trask was empowered to do all the necessary business, but she preferred to trust the doctor as to location, conveniences, and arrangement of rooms. The furnishing she would be glad to leave to Mrs. Carew. There were certain articles they had accumulated, there were some things stored in the city. Of both she sent a list.

“I consider her an admirable business woman,” exclaimed the doctor. “Not a word is wasted and how explicit everything is! What puzzles me is how such a

woman, and a strong-minded, far-seeing business man such as the father must have been, could have had such a son. Or was it in the training ! I suppose he *is* their child ! ”

Lyndell looked alarmed.

“ People do queer things for money sometimes. ” The doctor gave an expressive little shrug.

“ O you can't think —— ”

“ I do not think anything, really. We shall find out the facts some time. But I am more glad than I can express to have Millicent back. ”

“ We should never have consented to the marriage, ” said Lyndell decisively.

“ That is quite easily said now. I am not sure but we were all fascinated with Mrs. Henderson. So were the Kenneths, and many others. She never crowded in anywhere, but society was very ready to take her up. She was intelligent, broadly so, cultivated on many lines, charming when she chose, generous, lacking the one thing to make her a grand woman, the belief in something higher and nobler than herself. If it had not been for her son I should have cultivated her from the beginning. She would have been an interesting study to me. ”

“ In all this time Millicent has never once expressed an ardent desire to be at home, ” rejoined the mother with a secret pang, thinking her own thoughts.

“ She loved him at first, or was fascinated. I had a hope the fancy would wear itself out when I consented to the engagement. Decided opposition might have fanned the flame, perhaps covert opposition did the same thing. The wonder to me is that he was not attracted to some handsomer girl, or one with more society charms. ”

“ He did not care for society. Her playing seemed to answer some hidden need of his nature. He certainly

was a person not easily understood—I always felt that. He must have offered her some delicate flattery. For in many things she was the very refinement of a certain fastidiousness that is often difficult to manage.”

Lyndell was puzzled. Her own nature and experience had been so different from this.

“We cannot account for all the loves in the world or the apparent loves even,” with a grave smile. “And there are many other mysteries.”

“But I am afraid—I know she has not been happy”—and the mother’s tone was full of anguish.

“My dear wife,” and he drew her tenderly to his bosom, “we must not forget that Millicent took her own way. She came to neither of us for counsel. She listened sweetly, patiently, but I questioned even then whether it made much impression. Some rather stubborn natures are as hard to guide as the volatile ones. And after the private marriage there was but one course, which we accepted. Now we can only wait until she comes. We can bear each others’ burthens, but we are not asked to take each others’ sins upon ourselves. One did that for the whole world. We must leave them with Him, since He knows the secrets of every heart. Do you realize that is knowing us better than we know ourselves.”

CHAPTER XX.

UNDERCURRENTS.

“O MAMMA, listen !” exclaimed Honor. “This is Sherburne’s letter. Aunt Tessy and the two girls are going to Newport for a week, Sherburne of course. And he, they all insist I shall go with them. Some friend of Sherburne’s has a yacht and will take them out two days. Why, they will be here to-morrow.”

Her face was flushed, her voice had a curious tremble in it.

“Why, that is quite delightful. You will go of course. You ought to have one little excursion. And I think I was reading that some of the splendid war vessels are anchored there.”

Honor looked undecided.

Her mother laughed. “Are you afraid you will quarrel? Honor, you are old enough to outgrow such silliness. And I dare say Sherburne has outgrown it as well. Beside there will be no one to interfere with his royal highness.”

“I don’t like royal highnesses very much.” There was a pretty pout to her rosy mouth.

“But Aunt Tessy is very fond of you.”

“I had made up my mind not to leave you. We are having such a good time.”

She kissed her mother in a coaxing fashion.

“Suppose I wish you to go? For a week or ten days I shall be very much engrossed with some matters papa

has in hand. And I think he would like it. It was nice in them to include you."

Honor still looked undecided. Did she really not care for the pleasure? She was usually so eager.

"Then they will be here ——"

"To-morrow morning. Aunt Tessy wants to shop a little. They will not start until Friday—by the boat."

"Then you need not decide this moment."

"Honor, come and play duets with me," entreated Florence.

It would be silly to refuse without any just cause. She and Sherburne were very good friends again. He had written her some fine friendly letters, and seemed interested in her progress at college.

Dr. Carew gave his assent at once. Aunt Tessy and the cousins took it for granted. Della and Milly were quite grown up, rather pretty girls with soft dark eyes and hair, nice clear complexions and slim, graceful figures, so much taller than their mother that if one did not see her face she would have been taken for a younger girl. Sherburne was in the best of spirits, and charming.

"Hope wrote us a most enthusiastic account of the West Point trip," he said. "I really should have enjoyed being with you. But I had made myself such an unmitigated nuisance on the earlier visit that you did quite right to omit me. And there was a romantic love affair"—studying her with a smiling glance.

"Miss Losee's? Yes. There was a cruel parent who said she should have no lovers in her college course, but he has given in and all is serene."

"The end of it all—the natural end. So college girls do place marriage above education, and love has not lost its charm? The contrary is the general belief I find."

“Agatha is to come back and graduate. O,” indifferently, “numbers of the girls have lovers. One young woman in our House is engaged to a young licentiate and they will go out next fall as missionaries.”

“Miss Losee would pursue fun and admiration more notably than knowledge, I should think.”

“She is a good scholar”—decisively.

“Will she make a better wife for her four years’ training? And what is the young man like?”

“Perhaps you do not remember him. He is Randolph’s fast friend, and was a year ahead of him, now Lieutenant Westerfield.”

Sherburne shook his head. “My most vivid recollection was a parterre of sweet and pretty girls, and bees in gray and white and gold swooping down on them. Civilians stood no chance. Did you think I would misbehave myself that you left me out?”

“It was not my show. Miss Losee and Randolph managed it. The lieutenant was to be graduated, and next year I should have to decline the festivities on account of my own grand termination, you know. Then there was the ball.”

“Magnificent I suppose? Did you disdain the flushing yearlings?”

“Remember Randolph was a yearling then;” a little cloud of affront flying over her face.

“I suppose we all were in our day,” laughing good-humoredly. “You have promised to invite me to yours, you know.”

“Class day is the prettiest.”

“O, I mean to take it all in. Truly it *is* a pity you both come at the same time. How will you divide?”

“Papa couldn’t go up. He will go next year and mamma and Aunt Milly’s household will come to me.”

"I think the girls would like to. Della will be a full-fledged society girl. She will come up to Washington. And then I suppose there will be lovers."

"Of course, *not* being a college girl ;" archly.

He was not to be easily put out.

That evening it was settled, Honor thought without her assent. She asked Aunt Tessy rather mischievously what she would do with a crowd of girls, but auntie did not seem alarmed over the prospect. She was fain to include Florence, but Dell negatived the plan.

Truly it was very pleasant. Sherburne found some acquaintances at the hotel, and a naval officer was very polite and attentive to them. They went over the great man-of-war, delighted with the wonderful order and cleanliness, and the fine appearance of the men. One of the officers had served under Captain Harry Lepage, and Sherburne felt quite proud of the relationship.

Then the two days yachting was most delightful. Honor was bright and charming, rather amused to see some of the old jealousy cropping out.

"For Sherburne is so very amiable that I feel almost afraid something will happen to him," she said to herself in a mischievous fashion.

After that he succeeded in getting invitations to a hop, and though Aunt Tessy declared none of them had any regular dancing gowns, he said they would merely promenade and look at the others. But he did persuade Honor to dance once with him, and then a Middy that she had met on the vessel begged for a turn.

"You are such a beautiful dancer that it would be a great pleasure to have you for a partner," he pleaded. And almost before she knew it she was engaged for another. If her white gown was very simple the ease and

grace of her motions, and the thorough enjoyment made her quite an attraction.

There were so many beautiful new places and quaint old places to see that the week was all too short. Della was enthusiastic.

"If Washington is half as nice, I shall be glad and thankful," Della confided with sparkling eyes, and joyous voice. "You're so sweet, Cousin Honor, and you make one feel so at home. Edward said it would be twice as nice if we could persuade you to come with us, and it is. How lovely it would be if you were in Washington, too. Cousin Pearl thinks she may spend a month or two. She is charming. There are so many delightful people in the world."

Honor smiled at the girl's gladness and outspoken joy. They were both so proud of their brother, and Aunt Tessy's eyes smiled back to him so readily.

"You are not sorry you came?" he said as they were returning. "It really was very good of you. And you have given the girls so much pleasure. Mother would hardly have known herself if there had not been some one to keep her in countenance."

"O, you could have done that," returned Honor. "Indeed it is largely owing to you that the stay was so enjoyable. A man can do so many things where a woman has to hesitate a little."

She had seen too how ready every one was to pay Sherburne little courtesies. He had such a suave, refined manner. Had she seen him at his worst heretofore? And she, too, had adopted many of the delicate society graces, quite necessary if one cared to make the wheels revolve smoothly. She was a little proud of such a handsome and distinguished escort.

"I was so glad to have you dance that evening at the

hop. I was afraid you wouldn't. But you do it so enchantingly ——"

"O stop there," cried Honor flushing. "You might be laughing at me."

"But I am not," he appended quickly. "I really want to thank you ——"

"We shall quarrel over compliments presently," she said with much of her old vivacity and spirit. "You were in some degree the host and I the guest. I should have looked well being disagreeable. And I have had a very nice time." Her tone was rather incisive.

He flushed thinking of the times he had not rendered himself agreeable, but he made a gentle inclination of the head, as if he cordially accepted her statement.

"I wish you would go home with mother for a week or so." His tone was gently persuasive.

"O, I couldn't possibly. There is a fall wardrobe to get in order, for one must dress even if the harbor bar lies moaning—over backwardness and forgotten lessons. I want to brighten up a bit too, and go over some tough old things and get at least two essays in order, so you will have to admit that vacation has come practically to an end for me."

"There is only one year more. Are you glad or sorry? You are not going off anywhere to teach, are you?"

"No. I'm going to take a term of staying at home and being a mother girl."

Sherburne nodded and smiled rather mysteriously.

"Why don't you say 'you could have done that without all these four years of study! And what are you going to do with all the isms and ologies?' And fifty other things. You are too amiable," cried Honor sharply.

“Don’t you remember we promised each other last winter we wouldn’t quarrel any more? Father and Auntie Dell once had a dreadful time, though I believe that was about a falsehood some girl told, and after a little they became the best of friends. I think father doesn’t love Aunt Milly a bit better than he loves your mother. And since we’ve had the Sherburne feud we ought to have the Sherburne peace.”

Honor’s face was scarlet. She would not look up. Why did she want to provoke him again?

Aunt Tessy had a good many sweet things to say about Honor. She hardly knew what they would have done without her, and the girls besieged her to go home with them just for a week if no more.

It was delightful to inspire so much enthusiasm and tender regard. The Beaumanoir girls were very youthful, but very sweet and sensible too.

“And if you can’t come in the winter”—Della began regretfully—“oh Auntie Dell, if you could all come and keep Christmas with us!”

“Don’t count on so slender a chance.” Auntie Dell was smiling in a comforting sort of way, though there was a half worried expression in her eyes. But she was not going to spoil Tessy’s visit with any care of her own.

“Well next year then, next summer. Honor I half thought I should be afraid of you, but you are just as sweet and full of fun ——”

“As if she had not been three years in a college,” suggested Sherburne laughingly.

After they had said good-bye, Lyndell told Honor the Hendersons would be home the third week of September.

“O dear, just too late for me!” she exclaimed. “I ought to stay, but there will be the getting settled and

some new teachers to interview, and I want to begin with the very first of everything. This is the decisive year, really. And the fortnight with Aunt Tessy and the girls ——”

Her mother bent over from her desk and kissed her. “Honor,” she said in a tenderly appreciative tone, “I want to thank you for your sweet courtesy to the girls. I think you are growing more thoughtful for others, more patient with the little daily events that make up so much of life. Because one has high aims it should not make them regardless of the minor excellencies we can find in almost every character.”

“I’m afraid I haven’t very high aims ——” hesitatingly, raising her eyes with a rather deprecating expression.

“The highest aims are what a Virginian author of more than half a century ago called ‘the small sweet courtesies of life.’ ”

She had begun to consider a little what real living meant. It was something above physical enjoyment, it had new and broader meanings.

She was very much interested in the house, they had found one with a strip of land on one side that gave a space for grass and shrubbery. The next place was ivy grown, old English ivy that kept a certain amount of greenness all winter. It had needed considerable repairing for it had been standing empty, and the owner living abroad was very glad of a five years’ tenant who did not want the whole house remodeled.

Honor had an unexpected delight in a call from Miss Bradford. Here was a really fine girl worth cultivating, Lyndell decided, and she was pleased at Honor’s discrimination. An interesting face with certain lines of strength, womanly, refined and intellectual. She was

sorry Honor could not have her companionship this important year.

“And you will introduce her to Aunt Milly as soon as she comes back?” Honor besought. “She is just the one to appreciate the delightful society and charming conversation Aunt Milly deals out so generously.”

“I like her for myself,” said mamma with a heartsome smile. “I shall keep a little of her for myself.”

“And you will write me all about Millicent. Mamma, do you think she is very happy? For I can’t imagine the dreadful disappointment if you had idealized one very strongly and found out it was a great mistake. I suppose Milly writes about her inner self to you, but her infrequent notes to me are all concerning outside matters. I am glad Florence is more demonstrative. But I think we will not send her to college, mamma, unless she shows signs of being a genius,” a bright smile illumining her face.

Reese came home brown and sturdy, ready to begin the old round, and everybody who had places to fill and duties to take up were hurrying to and fro. Honor packed her trunks and said in her heart she was homesick beforehand, but she put on a brave front. She had a misgiving that her mother did not feel altogether right about Millicent. But she was too delicate to uncover any possible sorrow.

So she went her way and was so warmly welcomed by a host of girls and some of the teachers she cared for most, that she forgot about the homesickness, or that there could be any pressing anxiety in the world. Her very smile irradiated sunshine.

And now that everything was settled to the ordinary groove, Lyndell’s heart beat with a suffocating throb when she thought of her daughter. Would they always

be "Strangers yet," though bound by the closest of ties? O, what could she do? She prayed for strength, for wisdom, and that she might accept part of whatever burthen was laid upon her child, inwardly protesting that there should be any burthen.

The steamer was a day late. She felt as if there had been a great reprieve. And yet she must suffer it all over to-morrow, face this dread unknown.

Steamers came in filled to the utmost at this season. Every spot was thronged with friends who had been waiting for hours.

"We will drive around," Dr. Carew said. "There is no sense in adding to this jam." So another hour of impatience was consumed, and when they returned the crowd had thinned out a little. Leaving the driver to care for the carriage, they made their way through. Some of the stateroom doors were open and already deserted by those who had entered them a week ago with such alacrity and gladness.

They peered about. "Perhaps they are up on deck," suggested Lyndell.

Dr. Carew caught sight of Mrs. Henderson. Had the woman some mysterious secret of imperishable vigor? For she seemed scarcely to have changed in the two years. He made his way over to her and Dell followed.

"You are so good to come—though I knew you would," she began. "Millicent is in the stateroom gathering up a few last things. Will you go to her?"

This was to Mrs. Carew, and she made a little gesture with her hand. Dell took a few swift steps and the next instant had clasped her daughter to her heart. Neither could have spoken.

"And—your son?" exclaimed Dr. Carew in an in-

cisive manner, yet struck with a sudden pity for the mother.

"He is up on deck. We were all watching an hour or so ago. This is the worst part of the home-coming." She gave a vague, conventional smile. "And the house?"

"We have gone as far as we could. I hope you will like it. It is—rather out of fashion's line."

"Yes, I did not want to be surrounded by throngs of society people. We have had enough of that and are longing for quiet. Have you succeeded in getting servants?" There was a touch of nervousness about her.

"An excellent cook, I believe. Mr. Trask found her. The other is of my wife's choosing."

"We can go there at once?"

"If you prefer it."

"I think it would be as well. The maid will remain here until all the things have been inspected. They have gone over some of the trunks. We will take those with us. Shall we go up-stairs and find my son? Dr. Carew, can you wait until to-morrow to hear the story? It is yours by right. Part of it can be easily guessed."

He could not but admire the wonderful self-possession. They threaded their way in and out, among the various groups. If she had suffered it did not show. Ah, yes—there was a certain compression of the mouth, perhaps a line in the forehead, but some strong will had kept the mastery of the face.

The throng on the deck had quite thinned out. A gentleman rose from a seat before they had gone far and advanced towards them. He was well kept, well attired, and had an air of fastidiousness. There was a curiously vapid smile on his face, and the fine skin was beginning to be wrinkled. The eyes told the story at once, and Dr. Carew knew that before him stood another victim of

a dangerous pernicious drug that was the ruin of many souls as well as bodies.

"I am so glad to get home," he said as he clasped the doctor's hand, but the tone was lifeless with no ring in it. "We have had enough wandering about to last a century. And I have brought your daughter back well and safe. She has found so many things to enjoy. But now we mean to settle down and live our own life. We have brought home exquisite reminders of our journeying. But I am tired, tired."

The face settled into fretful lines and the eyes looked over to the great city vacantly. Then he turned to his mother in a half helpless questioning fashion.

"We will go down. Mrs. Carew has come also."

"Yes, and I have not seen my daughter yet," added the doctor. For an instant his whole soul protested.

Charlton caught his arm as they reached the stairway.

"I have been very good to her," he whispered. "I love her. You cannot take her away from me."

"O no," was the ready, consoling reply.

Millicent had gone straight to her mother's arms with a glad cry. For moments they stood locked in each other's embrace. But it was Millicent who recovered her self-possession first.

"It has all been splendid! Two marvelous years, mamma, and a wonderful world, enough to inspire one. I have longed for you all, and counted on the homecoming. We should have spent the winter in Great Britain, but for Charlton's health, that is the only country we have not seen, your birthplace."

"And you have been well?" Dell asked it in a curious nervous strain. Had there been any poignant sorrow?

"Look at me, mamma!"

She straightened herself up. The figure had filled out, though she was still slim, there was a power and dignity in the face that had not been a part of the girl's unformed character. The eyes were wet and lustrous with tears, but they told no tales of anguish.

"I have never been really ill—seasickness does not count, though I have gotten mostly over that and become a capital traveler. And all the rest! O, to think God has taken care of us and brought us all together again. That is enough to fill one with rejoicing. And there are many things—it will be a long, long while before they are all talked over. But we shall see each other every day—oh, mamma, don't cry, or if you do, let it be for very joy. For in these two years I have learned the higher truths, most of all how to love you. Why—I was an ignorant child when I went away, self-willed, crude and superficial, refusing enlightenment and hugging my own romantic desires, beguiled into delusive theories, yes, ungrateful and selfish! In all the years to come I shall make amends."

"If you had been happy"—for the mother's keen intuition told her that Millicent must have missed the great joy of life, perfect wedded love.

"But I have been. All at first I was in Paradise. Charlton was good and sweet and tender. Even when his great misfortunes came ——"

Her voice trembled then. "His health?" queried the mother.

"It is quite pitiful. He can never be well again. Papa's wisdom may do something for him—Mrs. Henderson has such faith in him. No, we must not talk it over now. Tell me of Honor and Randolph and Aunt Milly and grandpapa. O, there are so many dear ones!"

They were in the midst of family gossip when the

three rejoined them. Then Millicent gathered up her few belongings. Mrs. Henderson held a short talk with the maid, a sensible looking middle-aged Englishwoman, who was to see to the luggage when it had all passed. Dr. Carew would send a van.

He and the two mothers made their way out, Charlton and his wife following.

"We will all drive up to the house," he explained, summoning a cab for the travelers, and giving the driver the number. Then he and Lyndell returned to the coupé.

"What is it?" She clasped his hand in apprehension.

"Opium for one thing. I think now he must have been addicted to the habit before. I was very much afraid of some line of intemperance. There are subtle mixtures, and absinthe, that work more ruin than the common forms. I felt satisfied on that point however. If he had taken opium steadily I should soon have discerned that. He looks poorly and much aged. Millicent is radiant. She suggests the older Sherburnes to me. You will laugh when I say she has curious gleams of Aunt Aurelia as I knew her in my early boyhood."

Was that the elusive resemblance that had puzzled her mother? Dell made a mute protest. Yet Aunt Aurelia had shown the hard side of her nature only to Lyndell.

"I am not sure but that you had better have accepted our hospitality for the night," said Dr. Carew. "We have hardly given the rooms a homelike aspect."

"No, this is best," replied Mrs. Henderson. "You have chosen a most satisfactory location. And we are so used to settling ourselves speedily anywhere, after the fashion of travelers."

The upper rooms had rather more coziness. Charlton threw himself on a lounge.

"I am so tired," he said, fretfully. "Come and read me to sleep. Put your hand on my forehead, so. Can we stay here always, Millicent? I do not even want to stir. I would not go round the world again for all the diamond mines of Africa."

In ten minutes he was soundly asleep. Millicent threw a light robe over him, and finding her mother, they began an inspection of the house.

Down-stairs there was a large parlor, a dining-room, and at the end of the hall, making a sort of ell over part of the ground outside was another apartment that had been partly fitted up for a library. One window looked towards the street, and a large mullioned one over the yard, much larger than the average of such spaces.

"I could not have chosen better myself. I hope you found Mr. Trask satisfactory?"

They were standing by this window.

"Yes. Of course the financial side was his affair. I hope that will be all right," returned Dr. Carew.

"There is no need of saving money now. Dr. Carew, you have seen perhaps lovely and noble people swept down to the depths with misfortunes and losses. They had committed no crimes, they had made wise use of their money. Why did God allow it to be taken from them? And to others all is good fortune. Last year some stock in which Mr. Trask had invested that was needed for a consolidation scheme, suddenly went to three times its value. And we did not need it. In this very matter some of the poorer holdings were wiped out, and others suffered."

"That is one of the puzzles of daily life."

There was a brief silence. Then she said—"Have you guessed a part of the trouble?"

"Opium," briefly. "When did it begin? It must

have been of long standing to reduce him so, and he so young."

"There was worse in Paris. When we were going up the Nile he had some strange spells, fits, in plainer language. Two eminent French physicians at Paris gave them a name. It is epilepsy. The case is hopeless."

Dr. Carew's face expressed more than surprise. She shrank a little from the stern glance.

"Millicent will be spared all that is possible. Or if you think—but she will hardly consent to a separation. She was very much in love with Charlton."

"‘For better, for worse, so long as you both do live,’" Dr. Carew repeated solemnly.

"I *was* surprised at the marriage, that he had persuaded her into. I never imagined he would have the energy of resolve to do it. But he was afraid something would intervene. I had my wish for I *did* wish it, but oh, what would I not give to-day to have it undone. Between us both we have sacrificed a splendid young life. There is no forgiveness for it."

She wrung her hands as she spoke. No one could doubt her earnestness.

"My son had been a bitter disappointment. I wanted a daughter to love. I have won her love, and with rare generosity she takes most of the blame upon herself. There may be no better time for the story. You must hear it from the beginning."

"I should like to," with a gesture of assent.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARLTON HENDERSON.

MRS. HENDERSON leaned against the casement and in a low unemotional tone went briefly over her early life, her marriage, her surprise at the good fortune that had befallen her, Mr. Henderson's wealth, her ambitions and his indulgence; her joy at the birth of the son he desired, and his plans for him to fill a high station in life. He was to be a gentleman, to carry on a family, to take a place in the world his father had never found any time for.

“He was so pretty and bright and charming, and like me, always well. When his father was paralyzed and the case became hopeless he planned everything for the future. I wonder now that he could be so brave. Before this I had realized that to him I was simply the mother of his son, the wife was a minor consideration. His mind went the last of all, but his will had been drawn with much consideration by two eminent lawyers. A generous provision was made for me. We both were to go abroad, he was to have every advantage of education. His guardian was too indulgent, I have seen that since, and I was too proud of him. He was not a scholar. He disliked solid studies. Languages, poetry, the fine arts appealed to him. We divided our time between England and German towns and spent months in different places. In Rome he had an artistic fit and took up sculpture. Some steadiness of mind was lacking. If he had been compelled to work for a living he might have

done better. No doubt I made mistakes. There was always such a feeling of disappointment. I wanted him to distinguish himself in something, but it seemed quite impossible for him to keep at one thing any length of time.

“We met at Rome a Mrs. Seymour, a picturesque woman with clouds of light fluffy hair and infantile blue eyes, a half deprecating, fascinating manner with a slight dash of timidity, and a voice that she was proposing to cultivate. It had not much compass but she sang old-fashioned ballads in a manner that brought tears to one’s eyes. She had a husband in Cincinnati, I think, but she was unhappily married. He was a good deal older than she, and incompatible every way. She rarely spoke of him, but the facts appeared to be known, and there was much sympathy for her; the kind of woman that everybody seems ready to do for, men especially. Quite a number of Americans were going to Florence, and she with them. A week or so afterwards Charlton decided to go, though I liked Rome better without the gay party. However, we went. Charlton’s evident admiration for her troubled me not a little. Still—he was not quite twenty and she nine years older. She petted him and called him her boy and sang to him, but she did this for others as well. She had a caressing way, though she seldom transgressed propriety. But these are among the most dangerous of women.

“Then to my utter consternation Charlton insisted we should return to America taking her with us, and he would help her to get a divorce when she would marry him. He was so obstinate and unreasonable that he would listen to nothing. She had agreed to all this. I went to her at once in a state of intense indignation. She declared the wild proposal was his alone, that she

had only laughed a little as she did not suppose he was in earnest, that she had no thought of such a step, that she had been like an elder sister to him, and truly, Dr. Carew, with my experience and even a little disapproval of her, she did convince me that Charlton had drawn on his imagination for much of this. But the dénouement was terrible. He flew to her and found her with a Russian noble who had been very attentive to her and a wild scene ensued. He was so desperate that a doctor in Florence who had a private hospital took him in. He was ill there for several weeks. Meanwhile Mrs. Seymour and her Russian went to Paris. I learned afterwards Charlton had been her banker to a considerable amount.

“I think the beginning of the opium trouble was here, though I did not suspect it then. He had a fever. Afterwards we went to some German baths, but he was moody and quiet, cared nothing for society, little for any pleasure except music. After his early boyhood he had never been really affectionate. He gave up any further study. We traveled about, then some English acquaintances having bought a ranch were going out to Colorado, and he resolved to accompany them. I had never been westward, though we had come twice to New York. Charlton improved immeasurably in health. We had talked over that sad episode and nothing was too bitter for him to say about her. She was one of those adventuresses that flourish abroad and are a disgrace to any nation. I began to hope Charlton would fall in love with some one and marry. It was not because he despised all womenkind, but he was simply indifferent to love.

“As you know, his father had wished him to marry. I believed it would be best. I thought perhaps I could in

some degree control his choice. A nice, pretty domestic girl with one or two accomplishments, who would love him and come to regard me with affection. I used to study girls with this in view. Now and then we talked of housekeeping. I found he preferred New York. While he was up in the Northwest I came to Washington where he joined me. I met your cousins the Amorys, and also your daughter, to whom I took an unconscious fancy. Fate, or shall I call it a purpose, threw us together, when we came to the city. All connected with you, many others indeed, were living such broad, purposeful lives. I had ceased to believe in anything ; I was stabbed to the heart when I saw other mothers proud of their sons, I simply gave up and drifted. I had no hope of Charlton. There was nothing in him that could be kindled down deep, there would be only a little flame on the surface that the next breath of wind would extinguish. And yet he had no real vices. Drunkenness he abhorred. His greatest fault or indulgence was excessive smoking.

“ Will this give you the key to the tragedy? At first—I was mortally afraid he would not love Millicent. And then he did, more than I imagined was in his nature. I thought of all he could give her—Heaven forgive me, but I considered the fortune as well. Why should not his own children enjoy the wealth his father had made and preserved with so much care, rather than have it go to strangers? But I felt afraid of the consequences of your disfavor, and the delay. For then I had come to long for Millicent. I had tried to win her by pretty arts that find a ready way to the heart of youth. She would marry some time—you had another daughter to fill her place at once. If so be Charlton should grow indifferent, I would make it up to her a thousandfold.

“ They were married and very happy. He was

a delightful lover. We had a house at Tokio while in Japan and those months were an idyl. She grew and blossomed like a rose. I did not think there was so much to her. She has genius and power and exquisite taste and will yet make her mark in the world. Well, we went on again, seeing wonderful strange countries and peoples. We talk of the marvels of Europe, what are they to those of India ! lost almost in obscurity.

“Charlton had grown very changeable and unequal. At times an expression of furtiveness, of low cunning crossed his face that was disagreeable and startled me. It was at Bombay the terrible truth came out. There he had an opium debauch and for a fortnight it was an awful experience. I believe I should have felt grateful to God if he had died. She was prostrated at first, then she had the bravery of an angel, and we came to love one another as we never had before.

“The English doctor there said he must have used opium a long time. I had never thought of that, but it gave me the clew to his unequal moods. We both prayed and besought him, but in vain, though he promised never to go to extremes again. Alas ! we had the same experience in Egypt, then in Paris. Epilepsy had followed both cases. And now we may thank Heaven there are no children to inherit the weakness. Where did the strain come from ? His father was a strong, robust, well-balanced, unsentimental man, and that he kept so clear-headed amazed his physicians. And on my side they are a shrewd, hard-headed race. Life with me has been a long tragedy, but the end will come sooner to her. The French physician, both of them, thought it would be useless to attempt reformation. I want to leave the case in your hands.”

Dr. Carew was profoundly moved. It was not a case

for comfort or hope. Either would be the idlest platitude.

Dinner was announced at that moment.

"We should have sent some word home," said Lyndell.
"They will be worried."

"Father will suppose we have come up here. Reese will be engrossed with his lessons, and Florence will no doubt bewail mamma;" with a faint smile.

"It seems as if I must have been away an age," said Millicent. "Yet there have been so few happenings."

"Ruth Ensign is to be married shortly. Everybody nearly has grown up. Aunt Tessy has two pretty amiable young ladies. Bertram comes home at Christmas. Hope Drayton is charming."

Lyndell Carew paused. The greatest sorrow had come to her, she thought. It stood like a shadow over her shoulder while she sat here talking of the little every-day incidents and she wanted to cry out at the tragedy that had befallen them. Was this Millicent whose whole life had been blighted, who would never know the tender grace, the confiding sympathy, the true, near life of perfect marriage? O, did she realize what she had missed? She sat there with a new, cultivated grace in a curious calmness, was it not almost impassiveness?

No one wanted to eat but made a dainty sort of pretense. When they rose Dr. Carew turned to Millicent.

"I should like to see your husband again," he said quietly.

She had excused him. He had fallen asleep and they never disturbed him unless it was absolutely necessary.

Millicent led her father up-stairs. Charlton Henderson lay on the lounge, so pallid that one might fancy him dead. The fine drawn skin had a peculiar color, the

eyelids were not closed down tight, which heightened the similitude.

Dr. Carew took the limp hand. The pulse was irregular, a few strong beats succeeded by much fainter ones. But there was no indication of a speedy end.

They walked into the adjoining room together. Then Millicent suddenly buried her face on his bosom and his arms were clasped about her.

“O papa,” she began with a long, dry sob, “do not pity me, but help me to be strong and brave, and comfort mamma. Do not let her suffer for my fault. You may think it strange, but the awakening came so gradual that I suffered less. And his love never died, he loves me now; all the love he can give, not as you love, not as Uncle Drayton loves or Mr. Mallory. I thought there was only one kind of love that a man gave a woman when he chose her out of all the world. But I know now the soul of the man may be different. I was blind and foolish, but I did it all myself. And I must pay the price. If there were no love there would still be duty. And after that first dreadful time he was so repentant, he made so many solemn promises, and I believed him. Now I know he cannot keep faith unless—oh, papa, is there not something to strengthen a man’s weak, wavering will? Charlton has so many kindly qualities, if he could overcome this terrible habit!”

“The Parisian doctor believed there was no hope?”

“He said so to mamma Henderson. But we both thought of you ——”

“And I cannot work miracles, alas!”

Was she brave enough to hope for his recovery?

“If it was not for those terrible spasms ——”

“You have not been with him?” in quick alarm.

“Not when he was very bad. O, you cannot know

how good Mrs. Henderson has been to me. And such journeying about was like putting a new soul in one. The world is so rich and magnificent and so full of beauty and inspiration that sometimes I have tried to gather a little to console myself for other things. But whatever I may miss in my life I shall always know I thrust it aside with my own hand when I might have waited and gathered the full bloom."

He kissed her tenderly. She had accepted her life bravely. Thank heaven that she did not mean to beat her wings against the bars until they were bruised and torn. Was it some blind yet unerring wisdom,—for surely all this had not come from the brief experience.

"I shall come in to-morrow," he said trying to steady his voice as he unclasped her hands. Ah, if he could take her home out of it all!

"Do not let mamma worry. I still have so much to my life. O papa, how strong and splendid you are! How good to lean upon."

"We must go, dear. To-morrow, then ——"

She gave a short dry sound that might have been a sob, but straightening herself they went down together. She looked tired then, he remarked, but they exchanged quiet good-nights and promises for the next day.

"O, what can be done? What will be the end of it all?" cried Lyndell in anguish.

"Death will be the end of it—how soon, how long no one can forecast. The opium might not kill him in years, but it seems the epilepsy has made rapid inroads. I can tell better to-morrow."

"O, how can Milly live ——"

"She can live and be cheerful. I do not know how much she hopes. She has accepted it with the utmost bravery. She has more mental strength than I would

have given her credit for. I am most sorry for the poor mother, who has had hopes and ambitions and bitter disappointments. Millicent is young and this will end for her some day."

"But—could he not be placed—somewhere?"

"He is best there at present; Millicent is better off also. A wife living apart from her husband is an object of commiseration, and if she is at all attractive, in a dangerous position. They can have a nurse, I feel to thank heaven that there is plenty of money. And at present we do not know all of the story. I do not believe that we have any right to claim a royal exemption from trouble. I have seen so many cases—we both know of so many downfalls of promising men, some of women as well. There dear, the evil has been sufficient for this day. Let us put it aside."

They had to answer questions cheerfully. Even to his father, Dr. Carew could not speak of the truth to-night. Mr. Henderson had not recovered from his illness, and the sea voyage had rather knocked him up. Millicent had never looked so well.

The next day Dr. Carew studied the case more closely, and questioned Mrs. Henderson. She had been much afraid of some form of dissipation after his first illness. The opium habit had not entered her mind. The year before his marriage he seemed to have improved and taken more interest in everything. She had given up the hope then of his being anything but a dilettante. He could see she had counted on his marriage rousing him to some earnestness of life if not pursuit. They had been very happy. He was proud of Millicent. She was in the habit of keeping a kind of journal in which she jotted down descriptions of places and people, and odd incidents, and would read them aloud to his

great gratification. Poems were his delight as well.

At Bombay he had made the acquaintance of a retired army officer, quite a dissipated man but very attractive, and a queer surgeon. One night they had been smoking opium, and then followed the terrible time when he had lost all control of himself. The surgeon had kept him for days, and he returned home a wreck of himself, repentant, and so humbly affectionate, promising never to be led astray again, but confessing that he had used opium before. He made an effort to give it up, but after days of suffering declared he could not live without it. Millicent had been horror-stricken, but she could not endure the tortures he suffered, and with the use of a little, he soon became his natural self again, more really companionable.

“O, you must believe,” she cried with intensity of passion, “that if I had dreamed of such a thing I would not have desired or consented to his marrying any one. We had drifted so far apart. For years I had failed to make any real impression on him, to rouse him, not knowing how subtle an enemy held him in durance. I was lonely, discouraged, leading a useless life, wanting something else and not knowing how to attain it. So you see what a blessed boon Millicent was to me.”

In spite of all promises, all love, all efforts in his behalf he had allowed the fiend to drag him lower and lower.

Dr. Carew made a powerful appeal to him, but he soon saw how useless it was.

“I simply cannot live without opium now, and shall not try,” he said doggedly. “Millicent will stay with me, I know. Besides, I shall improve. That horrible illness laid me up, and I shall be more careful for the future. O, you need not fear.”

Millicent and her mother-in-law were full of interest in arranging the new home, and though neither would have put it into words, they both knew they were fixtures here until the sad termination of all came. Many treasures had been collected in their wanderings and were now brought to light.

"It is like living it all over again," Millicent said with a happy light in her face. "I am so glad to have had all these exquisite experiences."

"You need something to repay you ——"

"And your love." Millicent put her arms around the neck of her adopted mother. "It seemed love at first, you know, but it is something more sacred now," interrupted the soft, sweet voice.

It was one of the peculiarities of these two women that the sorrows and pangs were rarely dragged to the surface. Millicent had a curiously reticent nature that had been a trial to her own mother; Mrs. Henderson had never been really confidential to any one beside her husband, who had been her friend also. And by some inexplicable intuition they understood each other in a very little while. Millicent learned that the lack of love between mother and son was that the mother had given much and received nothing in return.

One of the fortunate concurrences of life is the adaptation of human nature to whatever befalls. True there are people who live in continual protest, but these are seldom rich or self-reliant souls. And though Lyndell Carew was shocked beyond measure at the outcome of her daughter's unfortunate marriage and for days seemed in a sort of mental paralysis, she began to awaken to the knowledge that there were still greater sorrows even in their circle, and hundreds beyond. There were husbands and sons lost to all sense of shame, drunkards.

Here and there a member of some fine family had gone to prison for a disgraceful crime. This could pass for one of the mysterious misfortunes, though they were forced to admit that it was the inexorable law of nature, even before the Saviour put it into words, that from him who hath not, who buries his one talent in the earth, "shall be taken from him that which he hath."

Had Millicent Drayton been at home she must have gone to her in the first bitter pang of anguish. But the doctor's magnificent well poised nature, shaped and strengthened by many a sad experience reacted upon hers. And the fact that Charlton Henderson improved physically, and conversed rationally, took a warm interest in the new home and adored his wife with a clinging fondness, breaking out occasionally into a fervent pride, consoled her, helped her to find a mental equilibrium.

It was her father who held the most sacred confidences of Millicent Henderson's experiences. She would not pain her mother with them. Though once Dell in a burst of anguish said —

"I don't see how you could bear the awakening, the awful disappointment!"

This gentle yielding nature that would seem like a lily to be torn and bruised and flung to the earth by the first storm that swept over it.

"Mamma, I think I could not have done so but for the consciousness that it had been the work of my own hands. The sensitiveness and the quality I esteemed as a delicate sort of humility I found was a speciously disguised selfishness. I wanted something of my own that I did not need to share with any one. I liked Charlton's exclusiveness. Yet I was bewildered by the love that seemed so ardent, so wonderful. I think now it is best that girls should know more of their fellow-creatures. A

cloistered nun seemed such a beautiful ideal to me. And though love and experience stood on either hand to warn and befriend me, I would have none of it, I saw clearly all my own wilfulness, and how I had shut out other experiences. Do you remember in Bunyan's marvelous story the little crooked lane where the pilgrims walked and the Country of Conceit? Yet just above it were the Delectable mountains. I had gone in the little crooked lane of my own will and persistency. I could not stay there and call on any one to pull me out. God gives the strength to help one's self, and this was due to my earlier training, to your dear teaching, mamma. Since I had insisted upon assuming the burthen, I must hear it."

How brave and lovely she looked! Had not the bitter lesson been needed? Lyndell thought of some things in her own life, of the havoc she might have made but for God's interposing hand. She was shocked to think she had almost upbraided Him in her prayers.

Wanderers for pleasure were flocking in from mountains and seaside, and across the ocean. Houses were opened, social life began, clubs and charities and entertainments held sway.

The Henderson household wore no air of mystery. Mr. Henderson and his wife drove in the park and through the most fashionable thoroughfare. He was admitted to be something of an invalid, and his pallor and heavy eyes betrayed it. They were seen at some of the opening concerts of the season, a few old acquaintances called, a luncheon or two was given and their status established.

Millicent shrank from this at first.

"It is much better," said her father. "There is no question but Charlton will gradually lose his mind; better imbecility, painful as it is to bear, than violence.

While you can, ward off any curiosity. There is more than one home my child, where the skeleton comes to the feast, even if not with the lessons of the old Egyptians."

Then the Draytons returned full of life and interest, with glowing accounts of the town that had been started as one of the experiments in behalf of humanity, a benevolence rather than a charity.

"It gives one the feeling of having lived ages," declared Reese Drayton, "to see the thriving town of old people, children and grandchildren, and to be able to remember that it was once little better than a desert, and that it is the work of our hands and our brains. Lyndell, were we pioneers? For if you hadn't discovered me out in those wilds—" and a proud yet humorous smile crossed his face.

"O, papa, you talk as if Aunt Lyndell was a ——" Hope paused and blushed, while the others laughed.

"We have turned the quarter of the century, Hope, and this was before I was married," returned Aunt Lyndell with a light of satisfied happiness in her face. "Yet, how strange it all seems to look back. And the greatest things often grow out of small beginnings."

"And everybody is so prosperous and happy," said Aunt Millicent. "Cousin Gifford's wife and family are charming. Alice Osborne is winning fame abroad. Bevis is married and has two babies, and your namesake Dell has a splendid lover. Such a circle of friends about them—the whole journey has been delightful."

Mrs. Drayton was much surprised in meeting Millicent Henderson. She said to Dell —

"It doesn't seem as if Milly could grow and change so much in two years, and, yes, improve as well. But a woman seldom comes to her best until she has reached

her first quarter of the century. There are two or three decisive years which determine the sort of woman she will make. But Milly kept extremely youthful until her marriage."

She wanted to say—"What a pity she should have married that way. She is worthy of a better companion."

Lyndell had explained that the consultation of physicians had pronounced it one of the brain diseases for which there was little hope.

Millicent Henderson felt the slow subtle change. There were lapses of memory, there were hours of irritability when even her caresses, her reading or music failed to charm, yet he could not bear her out of his sight. Then he would brighten up, insist upon seeing guests, and acquit himself in a most gentlemanly manner.

One of these evenings the Draytons had been in. They were all in the sitting-room up-stairs. Hope was fascinated with beautiful curiosities and adornments, and the charm of the elder lady.

"I really don't know what to do," Mrs. Drayton was saying. "Six of us have promised an entertainment every fortnight for the benefit of a home recently started for elderly people of education and cultivation, where they can have congenial society and a few of the pleasures still in their power to enjoy. Mine comes in Christmas week. I had counted on Professor Kenneth and Princess for music, but they will be at Sherburne. Two or three others I had thought of will be away. O, I wish there was something new and fresh;" and she gave a sigh. "I am really tired of the repetitions."

Charlton started up suddenly. He was lounging in the corner of the capacious sofa with his hand on the arm of his wife's chair.

“Ask Millicent to come and read you our experience of housekeeping in Japan.”

Millicent colored quickly, and gave him a deprecating look.

“O, yes. Did you keep an account of it?”

“And there were the stops in China, the queer people and events. I like her to read them over to me.”

“You kept a journal,” said Hope. “Why, mamma, it would be interesting. And Cousin Milly is such a beautiful reader.”

“Don’t you remember,” said Charlton irrelevantly, “that I met you first at one of those entertainments?” and he patted his wife’s hand with a spasm of tenderness.

“But I am afraid—playing accompaniments doesn’t bring you much into public view.”

“I want to see the journal,” began Aunt Millicent, much interested, taking a mental survey of the younger woman. She would have an effective presence, and she had been round the world. Then it would be a very select entertainment.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LARGER FLOW OF LIFE.

LYNDELL CAREW had kept her word to Honor concerning her friend Miss Bradford whom she had found a most refined and intelligent girl. She made her a welcome guest, she also introduced her to the Draytons. Hope was charmed with her.

The girl and her mother were reading Millicent's "journal" as she called it, which was full of graceful turns, vivid descriptions and amusing incidents.

"Why, mamma," cried Hope enthusiastically, "Cousin Milly is certainly a genius. Travel has brought her out. She used to be so shy and almost ungracious at times. Why, I don't wonder Mr. Henderson is proud of her."

Just then Miss Bradford was announced. She had come on a little errand connected with literary matters.

"O," she began when that was through and their own occupation explained; "do you mind having me listen? You know everybody is so interested in brave Japan since her war with China."

"I should really like to have your opinion," replied Mrs. Drayton.

Millicent Henderson would have been flattered by the opinion.

"If it were a real public occasion it would win very high praise. Mrs. Drayton, I must come and hear it all," she added.

"If we *can* persuade Millicent," the elder woman said rather dubiously, remembering the girl of the past.

She found it quite difficult. Millicent gave a decided negative. "She might read in a parlor to a few ——"

"But this is not very large, a pretty club-room. And tickets at two dollars do not call forth such an extensive crowd. Miss Flavel is to recite some poems for us and there will be the breaks of the music. Hope is to play twice."

Charlton insisted that she should. One could never tell quite how any matter would affect him. Sometimes he was hardly willing for her to make calls at her old home. He seldom went anywhere except to drive, or to some musical entertainment. But about this he was very exigent, and she finally consented, though in her heart she shrank from publicity. But she feared the consequences of flatly opposing her husband.

Honor came home strangely curious, to be surprised beyond measure. She had fancied her sister worn and depressed.

"Millicent is so different," she declared. "I am sure I shouldn't know her anywhere else. She is changed in looks as well. Why, mamma, she is fine looking. Do you suppose people borrow unconsciously or are influenced by those they are with? For she suggests Mrs. Henderson. She seems so tall and—I can't think of just the word—impressive will do. She has grown up to her years. She is older than I now."

"It is the experience and the familiarity with the world," replied the mother. But she knew it was many other things as well.

Millicent Drayton had said—"I wish you could have known Aunt Aurelia half-a-dozen years earlier and under more favorable circumstances. She had the same air of

devotion that Milly gives to her husband. Grandpa couldn't bear to be crossed in those later years. And she certainly does resemble her. Is it the Sherburne coming out? I do suppose we all have a little share of it;" with a soft ripple that was half an apology for a laugh.

Could she ever grow hard and unjust? Had she not shown some of it in her earlier years, traits that had gone with a sharp pang to the mother's heart.

So Millicent Henderson was overruled, and took her place as chief speaker before an audience who had more curiosity than she dreamed. There were women who still envied her the fine marriage she had made, the most unlikely girl in the whole circle to achieve such a thing.

Edward Sherburne had come up for a flying visit. They were more than sorry not to have gathered all the Sherburnes together, but it must surely happen once again while grandpapa was alive. Della was having a lovely time in Washington, and plenty of admirers. Washington was all in an excitement on this Cuban business, but of course it would simmer down presently. We had a wise and far-sighted man at the head of things.

"We are all to go and hear Millicent this evening," laughed Honor. "I don't know but we shall have a genius in the family after all."

Then she had to tell the story of Milly's return and what had led up to the reading.

The pretty club-room was filled with quite an array of fashion. The music was of a high order, the recitation fine, and then Millicent Henderson stood calm and fair, tall and self-possessed, her lavender tinted gown of silk and velvet adding a dignity to the graceful figure. At first her voice was hardly clear, but she gained courage as she went on. Her experiences were so fresh and entertain-

ing, her descriptions graceful and poetical, her little home scenes, legends, the simple, charming people, the exquisite friendliness, the merry, happy side, the pride and bravery as well. Sometimes she forgot her reading and talked vividly from memory, inspired by the attentive audience.

It was a brilliant success, certainly. She was congratulated on every side. Sherburne greeted her with delight and the warmest of praise. Charlton and his mother listened with pleasure. There were to be some refreshments afterwards.

"I am tired to death," Charlton declared abruptly. "Do you know if the carriage is here?"

The janitor found that it was.

"Then let us go home."

Mrs. Henderson excused herself gracefully. She really longed to get away. The old timidity swept over her.

"Really, Cousin Honor, I am not sure but Millicent will distance you," said Sherburne gaily.

"I'm thinking whether I can get up courage for one oration. It was just splendid. I never saw Milly as nearly handsome as she was to-night. I think marriage has changed her mysteriously."

"She ought always to wear lavender and lace on state occasions. How wretched Mr. Henderson looks. What a pity ——"

"O, she will be a rich widow," some one behind them commented almost as if in answer to his thought.

"She will not," whispered Honor with a scarlet face. "If there are no children the whole fortune when he and his mother are done with it goes to found some kind of an institution."

"What an awful shame!"

Charlton Henderson's enthusiasm was all over. He was weak and tremulous, and presently cross. Millicent took off her handsome gown and donned a white one, and for the next hour tired as she was, soothed and caressed, repeated snatches of musical verse and finally wooed sleep to the fretted brain. But the remembered admiration surged about her like a strain of music.

Miss Bradford was offered a seat in the Drayton carriage.

"Do you suppose Mrs. Henderson kept a journal of all her trip?" she asked. "There is so much interest in the East just now that it would make a fine book. Her descriptions are so vivid and clear-cut. How much she must have enjoyed everything!"

A few days later there came a request that Mrs. Henderson would repeat her talk before an association that would be only too happy to comply with her terms, whatever they might be.

Charlton read the note and flung it angrily into the grate.

"Do people imagine you are going to turn into a common lecturer?" he inquired in the utmost irritation. "And—money! You of all other women have no need."

"I do not think I should like it," she answered quietly.

"You are not to be at the beck and call of the rabble. You belong to me."

Millicent made no reply. Often, but not always she found silence soothing. And now some of her old timidity returned. She wondered how she could have gone into the matter with so much zest.

Her father expressed his hope in a much gentler fashion. He could see the danger of admiration.

Dell had felt rather proud of it.

“But I never in my wildest dreams fancied Milly being anything of a genius. How she can love Charlton Henderson amazes me.”

“She doesn’t love him. That is the pity of it. She does not know what love is even yet. She made a girlish ideal of him and loved her ideal. There has been and will be a slow process of disillusion. She has grown in mind and soul, a late growth that comes to many people. She pities Charlton profoundly, she would save him any pang. She is trying to do her whole duty. If she had loved him at first, duty would not look so large now. It is best for her to go on in ignorance. If some man with a fine brain and large tender soul of purest sympathy should cross her path and open her eyes——”

“O don’t! don’t!” cried the mother in keenest pain.

“Men and women have come to this pass and have not sinned either. But it is a bitter knowledge.”

Sherburne enjoyed his two days’ stay with keen zest. Hope and Honor were his constant companions. Hope was quite divided, she was longing to go to West Point again, but it looked ungracious not to pay Honor the compliment. If they could only put in both!

Then the holidays were over, and everybody was back at work, while society rushed into all kinds of gayety. A curious talk of war rose on the air. There were hot discussions in congress. Fears rose and fluttered on the air, and then dropped into vague disbelief. Everything was in a ferment. Sympathy was on the side of those who had struggled so long and vainly for liberty.

An insulting letter from the Spanish Minister at Washington roused the whole country. But this was a mere breath to the shock that reverberated from North to South when treachery sent the *Maine* and her crew, who had

been received with a certain friendliness, to destruction and death. Every one was horrified! Then sounded the call to arms, and the nation that was deemed too much at ease in its prosperity to listen to the whisper of war, rose in a sudden enthusiastic burst of patriotism, and held out her good right hand to the suffering people at her very gates.

Yet the daily avocations of life went on. Lyndell Carew gave thanks that her boy would be spared to her, for he had hastened to write, saying he should finish his course of study. There were already so many trained men waiting for opportunities that the younger men would not be needed. Volunteers poured in from every side. Battalions were arranged for Cuba, orders sent to the fleet in Chinese waters to proceed at once against the last Spanish possession in the East.

Miss Bradford had taken an unusual interest in young Mrs. Henderson since the beginning of the new year. She had talked over the articles most of which she had perused, to one of the heads of her department.

"The least thing about the far East is of interest now," he returned. "I should like to see them."

Millicent was quite dismayed at first and went to her aunt for counsel.

"I do advise you to undertake it," Aunt Milly said. "Bring the papers around here and let us go over them."

"But I do not feel as if I was a genius," she returned hesitatingly. "I saw these things, I lived with them and in them. Any one could give an account of them."

"Not every one could do it in that vivid interesting manner. Millicent,—" gravely. "There may come a time when this will be a great pleasure to you."

For now the elder Millicent understood there might be years of watchful care and well-worn patience that would

require some wider interest if her soul continued to expand.

“Suppose we go over your journal. I will add my experience and together we will cull what appears most interesting.”

“How good you are, Aunt Milly!” She glanced up with grateful eyes.

They both went to work. Mrs. Drayton annotated, suggested, marked what she thought most likely to appeal to the public and Millicent copied. There were many hours of leisure, and Charlton often went to sleep early in the evening. He grew curiously fond of having the war discussions read to him, and sometimes insisted that she should go over the old days, recalling some things she had forgotten. She was quite sure he began to improve. His memory was clearer, he was less fretful. She had said nothing about her book, not at all sure how he would take it.

There were times when Millicent bewildered even herself. How had she come to make this awful mistake? What had changed her until she seemed to be altogether another person?

She spoke of this to her father.

“It is growth of soul and mind.” Had Randolph taken so much of the intellectual and will part at first? Or, had some of the environment been unsuited to her? Whatever it was—perhaps it needed just this strain of sorrow and repentance and earnest endeavor to perfect it.

Grandpapa Carew had come back to his first fond love for the girl. To him she had some suggestions of his sister Cornelia who had been her mentor through those impressionable years.

But the saddest of all knowledge to Millicent was the fact that she must grow away from her husband. The

strength and conscious discernment of mental breadth, the true and broad perceptions of life, such as her father and mother had shared, would never await her. This destiny had been of her own wild ignorant making. At her side had stood tender counsel which she had thrust away, an impatient longing for a love that no one else could share, and the love had proved dead sea fruit. But she had also seen that other women made mistakes and presently come to a measure of indifference, a kind of outwardly pleasant going along side by side. There was no growth to these, just acceptance. Then was the unfolding on higher lines the wisest?

Her manuscript was nearly all in order. If she could have a few uninterrupted hours she could send it to Millicent to-morrow. Already the first half had been favorably passed upon. But so often she was wanted to read or play, the piano was in the sitting-room, and both chambers opened out of it. On the other side of hers was Mrs. Henderson's.

Charlton had been unusually cheerful for several days. He had seemed rather listless at dinner. Joseph, a young colored man of some education and a year's training in a hospital, had been secured by Dr. Carew to keep watch and ward, though ostensibly as a waiter, and to drive them out as the carriage was kept on livery. This night the last of March, he had begged permission to go to a wedding where he was to be best man.

They had come up from dinner. Millicent read the evening paper aloud and they all commented on the stirring news. Now and then Charlton paced the floor, his frequent habit.

"I think I shall go to bed," he remarked. "I feel sleepy. No, I do not want any music but just quiet. Do not disturb me."

He kissed Millicent and went to his room. There would be time to finish her work, though one could never tell. In half an hour he might be calling for her impatiently.

She arranged her desk and began writing. Once she crept softly to the door. Charlton lay on the bed dressed, with his smoking jacket on, and did not seem to move a muscle. Mrs. Henderson had an entertaining book, and said she meant to sit up until Joseph returned.

"I shall keep you company in the sitting-room. I have several pages to finish."

The elder woman nodded smilingly.

And though Millicent had said steadily to herself she was no real genius, that she could only tell of the things she had seen and lived through, there was a thrill of satisfaction in doing this. Thought, that wondrous power enlarged upon itself, had a mysterious charm,—was it inspiration?

She said the last word presently. How strange it would be to see this in print, to read it over as if it had been the work of some one else. Would there be commendation, praises! she was still girl enough to think of that.

How quiet the house was! The wind that had been blustering most of the time had died down. Was it eleven or twelve that struck some time ago? She looked up at the clock—why it was nearly one.

Startled, she went into the next room. Mrs. Henderson had donned a white flannel dressing-gown, and sat in her high-backed chair with a bright cushion back of her head. Her book was still in her hand but she had fallen into a doze. The step roused her.

"I did not think it was so late," said Millicent. "I wish Joseph would come. Charlton laid down on his bed undressed."

He was not always in a pleasant mood when disturbed from a sound slumber.

“O, Joseph must be home very soon now,” said the mother.

Millicent stole softly to her husband’s room. The light had been put out—it was burning when she looked before. There was no smell of gas so it had not blown out. Something lay on the bed in a heap. She relighted the burner—it was the smoking jacket and two or three other articles.

“Charlton,” she called.

Mrs. Henderson came.

“He is not here,” in affright.

The mother searched the room. The door leading to the hall was bolted on the outside. They always slipped the bolt after he had gone to bed.

“He must be in the house ——”

“He did not come through the sitting-room, of that I am certain,” said Millicent. “And I must have heard the windows ——”

“Let us go down-stairs. I will call Janet.”

Janet, the Scotch-English maid they had secured at Bombay, who was most thankful to leave the place, came hurriedly in answer to the summons. They went cautiously down the wide stairway. The hall door was open an inch, latterly it had caught on the sill. The vestibule door was open also.

“He has gone out,” said Mrs. Henderson. “Still it will be best to search.”

There was a quick step coming up the street. Joseph appeared in a moment or so.

“O, go at once for papa,” begged the young wife.

“I had better look through the house first,” he said.

He and Janet searched everywhere. Charlton Henderson was not to be found, so the man started.

“I do not see how he could have gone out. And with the door bolted ——”

“It might not have been bolted then. I oiled it only this morning to make it go noiselessly. I am sure I could fasten it without the least noise. It is much more likely than that he went through the room where you were sitting.”

The grate fire was dull. Millicent raked it a little, then both sat down. It was not the first vigil they had kept together.

“O,” said the elder after a long pause, “I wonder if I can ever be forgiven for bringing this sorrow upon you!”

“You did not, dear mamma.” She leaned her head down on the other’s shoulder. “It was my own doing. I—I was so sure I loved him.”

“I wonder what your father would say to a mother who warned every one away from her child, who felt he was in some sort an abnormal, without having any good grounds to go upon. I was horribly afraid of intemperance. His father despised it, had no patience with it, would not have a drinking man about him if he could help. That dislike seems the only thing Charlton has inherited from either of us. And here is this other horrible vice!”

“O mamma, let me comfort you. Papa said once that it was harder for you, because it had been such a lifelong disappointment.”

“Did he say that? O, thank him! You are young—Millicent, I know it cannot be wrong not to pray for length of such days as his will be. Let God do as He will and let us both be content. I have fought against

this useless, futile, unprofitable life. I had so many proud and high desires for him. I did hope love would work this miracle. But he has no trustworthy capacity for anything. Yet I have hoped a little again ——”

Her voice trembled and ceased for awhile. Then she said softly, pressing the cold hand to her lips—“Child, you will be my salvation if you could not be his. God will make you that amends.”

They sat there until morning. Then Dr. Carew came in, and found them much more tranquil than he had expected, for they had comforted each other.

“I have set a private detective hunting up the opium joints. I think they will find him in one.” Dr. Carew knew that men of this stamp rarely committed suicide. “Meanwhile we will have nothing said.”

Mrs. Henderson raised her eyes in thankfulness.

The next day at early evening they brought Charlton Henderson home in a coach. Two men carried him up-stairs, and Joseph disrobed and bathed him. Dr. Carew stayed all night, for the first time in his life fighting half-heartedly. The barren fig tree had been cut down by the Master’s mandate, but barren human lives had to go on. It was a great mystery.

After that the old enemy returned. A regular nurse took care of him. He did not want either of the women to remember such scenes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HONORS AND HONOR.

EVERYTHING seemed to go on the same; living cannot change very much even in the midst of war talk and war itself. People who thought heroism and self-sacrifice had been swallowed up in peace and money-making, were surprised at the wave of enthusiasm, of the young men who rushed to the front not for their own safety but something finer and better, to give of themselves for another, the highest inspiration.

Lyndell Carew admitted to herself that motherhood *was* selfish. There was a little secret joy she was almost ashamed of as she thought her boy was safe for the present.

“If the war lasts the newly fledged fellows will be sent out to the different army posts to release the more experienced ones,” he wrote. “I am so glad you were all here last year when everything was splendid. Now all is hurry and rush. There will be some early examinations—some of the men have set their hearts on going to Cuba. And we thought there never could be a war again! Isn’t it queer and wonderful about Millicent’s book! Just the right time for it, ‘the hour and the man’ only this is the woman and the opportunity. So you must all go to congratulate Honor.”

It was true it was a golden opportunity about books on the East. The travelers more by accident than first design had spent three days at the island of Luzon and every word about Manila was seized on with avidity.

The wonderful story of its sudden capture and the sinking of the Spanish vessels was at first deemed incredible, then aroused a tremendous enthusiasm.

Even the college girls ran to warlike fancies. This one had a brother or cousin or some one who had volunteered. It broke in upon their interest for themselves, yet it had all to be gone through with.

They seemed to leave Lieutenant Westerfield undisturbed, to Agatha Losee's great joy.

"You and my mother will be able to shake hands," declared Honor with a sort of ironical laugh. "I looked for her to be a Spartan mother and she isn't Spartan a bit."

"And I suppose you looked for me to wave a flag and cry—'Go oh beloved, the country calls.' But I can't get up so much enthusiasm for stranger people. I do hope Olin will stay hidden in Michigan wilds until Cuba is set free, and what do we want with those miserable Philippines?"

It was a bigger question than could be answered by a sweet girl graduate.

Honor found herself quite a reflected light, and at some moments it rather irritated her. After her four years of study Millicent had gone beyond her at a bound. To be sure there was the travel—the grand opportunity. She was glad. She congratulated Milly warmly, and the elder wrote a sweet letter with not an arrogant line in it.

"I suppose it is a sort of family inheritance," commented one of her classmates. "Your aunt is quite famous, and your father very much so. One of my sisters lives by a book of his that she thinks the best and most useful thing in the world. She brings her children up by it. I believe she trains her husband on the same

lines. Some day I suppose you will astonish all of us ! ”

She had not astonished any one as yet. She had stood high in her classes, owing to a good memory and a capacity for downright work. She had managed to grind out some quite decent verses, she had written some solid, sensible papers. There were girls that went far beyond her. She was a bright, companionable girl, she could fill any ordinary station, had her four years given her anything more ? And no doubt she would marry a commonplace young man, she really *loved* commonplace people when it came to that, people who could enjoy everything right along and were not waiting until they could stroll through the Louvre before they dared admire art, pleased her best.

A month beforehand she inquired who could and would come. Aunt Tessy and the two older girls, Sherburne perhaps, the adverb was his mother's—and a young man. For Della had been engaged three months and would be married in the fall when Bertram came home. Then they would all go to Boston, from thence up to Canada, down the St. Lawrence and to Niagara. Mamma and Florence and Hope Drayton, who wanted to see what the inside of a girls' college was like.

There was plenty of time to engage rooms for them. But oh, how full every day and hour was with concerns besides the examinations. Honor began to feel as if she had outgrown the fun, the little farewell suppers in each others' rooms had the same flavor as last year. She had never been warmly attached to the golf club, but she remembered how wild she had been over tennis in her second year, and what scores she had made at basket ball.

Yet it was a great delight to see them all. Mr. Beall was from Richmond, a tall fine-looking young fellow, undeniably southern, and with the charm of elegant

breeding. He was a lawyer, and his father a large real estate dealer, and pretty, sweet, homelike Della had captured this well-informed, rather intellectual young man, just as Princess had captured a scholar and savant.

There was no Sherburne. And he had promised so faithfully to come! Honor felt indignant.

"Reese sent his best wishes," said her mother. "He is going up to West Point with papa. It won't be near so gay this year."

"And he said 'to comfort himself, he would take a look at the Barnard girls,'" appended Hope.

"I'm glad you came so early. I can show you around a little and take you to your lodgings. The glee club gives an open air concert to-night, and the campus will be packed. There is the great play to-morrow night, and then class day, which is really beautiful when you haven't seen it too often. I have two luncheons for to-morrow and the supper on class day. But I'll be as good as I can."

Their rooms were small, except one that was double bedded, but Mrs. Carew said they were glad to be all together. Mr. Beall would go to the hotel, though that was crowded. He walked beside Honor, expressing his admiration of everything in an extremely charming manner. He had but a very limited acquaintance with northern towns and cities.

"I suppose that is the Washington cousin Agatha Losee goes wild over," said one of the seniors. "I don't consider him handsome enough for a heart break," and she laughed indifferently.

"That is a Mr. Beall, Miss Della Beaumanoir's betrothed," she answered shortly.

Honor was in the chorus of the glee club, where, she declared, "sound and fury" signified a great deal. The

campus was filled, then crowded. The moon was doing his very best to convert the world to the silvery heresy, and a cool wind revived the spirits that had drooped through the day. The crowds of girls wandered up and down felicitating themselves that they could be listeners.

The repertoire was certainly varied. It began with some fine numbers that sounded bewitchingly on the soft air, and by slow gradation went to saucy, rollicking fun that was applauded beyond measure, and if the club had responded every time they would have sung until morning.

"Did you find your letter?" asked Agatha. "I brought it up and laid it—why I think on your desk."

Honor was tired, cross. She tumbled things off on the floor. They were to be packed to-morrow morning. She would ask mamma to look after them. O—here was the letter.—She knew Sherburne's stub pen. Of course he wasn't coming, and to make weak excuses was adding insult.

"DEAR HONOR: I shall come for class day, traveling all night, and leaving behind me business enough to set one crazy. With a thousand best wishes and love.

"SHERBURNE."

And then Aunt Tessy said the next morning—"O, Honor, did you get a note from Sherburne? He said he would write. They are frightfully busy, and his father said he did not see how he could spare him."

Honor smiled and nodded. She was her bright self again.

She hunted up two of the new seniors, vivacious girls, and put her young cousins in their charge, to be shown everything. Then she went to her two luncheons and made a dainty farewell speech at each one, took the girls

to an afternoon tea, ran briefly over her play and acted with the utmost spirit. She had to come out with two other important actors, and the three made funny impromptu speeches.

Mr. Beall complimented her among the others. In fact she was staggering under floral tributes, and trying to reply to those around her.

“You are tired to death,” said her mother tenderly.

“I think I’ve been asleep the last half hour. It is my dual body or my astral body that has entertained the crowd.”

“The poor girl!” exclaimed Aunt Tessy. “There is twice too much. They take it a good deal harder than the boys.”

Hope and Della and Milly thought it all wonderful. And class day was the crowning glory. It was the last time the white robed seniors were to march in this procession, crowned with ivy which was a substitute for laurel and bay. Then came the juniors, the ushers clearing the way with their white ribboned sticks, the crowds pressing nearer and nearer. The seniors take their places. How splendid they look in spite of the excitement and labor of the last three days. There is a brief address of congratulation, a reply from the class president, a few more speeches that very few hear and every one applauds, some fine songs, a sort of valedictory, and the cheering rises in deafening waves that threaten to submerge everything; the waving sea of white breaks up, and seems swallowed by friends and relatives.

The day had begun by a sort of golden heat, but the soft gray clouds came to temper it, and an east wind seemed wandering up from some distant sea with reviving fragrance. The crowds began to stroll around. Honor felt a hand on her arm and flushed. Fifty eyes were watch-

ing. Of course that was the handsome cousin Miss Losee talked about so much.

"I thought I never should get here," he said. "How splendid you all were! It was worth coming to see."

By this time Honor had recovered her presence of mind. She almost guessed it teased him to be introduced to this one and that, and have to say pretty things; to be followed about by a crowd and asked innumerable questions.

Long tables had been set for luncheons for special parties and a guard stood over every one so that no strangers might crowd in. Honor found theirs, or at least the end they were to share. Miss Losee had been entertaining Mr. Beall, and now she trained her guns on Sherburne. There were two vacancies and Honor summoned two graduates, one with the beautiful voice whose singing had been such a pleasure. They were all very gay, even Hope blossomed out into a wit, Sherburne said afterwards. Honor wondered why she should have cared so specially about his coming. It was nice to have him to be sure, but she could have lived without him.

There was some rowing on the pretty little lake, there were flirtations with those who were lucky enough to find a young man, there were groups of girls promising undying friendships, bewailing the separation, exchanging plans. Honor asked Sherburne to take Hope for a ramble.

"I'd rather have you," in a spoiled child fashion.

"You can't have me, I'm going to sit here by mamma and talk and rest. I have scarcely seen her."

She made a gesture of dismissal with her hand and he obeyed reluctantly.

Honor wanted to hear about Millicent. How wonderful it was that she should have scored such a success.

"It seems quite curious," said her mother, "that papa should have induced Aunt Millicent to enter the lists, and that she should have returned the interest in this manner. Though I am not sure but Miss Bradford had a large share in it."

"And Miss Gilbert—do you see much of her?"

"Princess is a sort of godmother to her. They are very charming friends. And Uncle Con is so interested in Millicent's book."

"And Mr. Henderson?"

"He was very ill. At one time papa thought he would die, but he rallied and is quite like himself again."

Lyndell sighed.

"Will he ever recover?"

"No, dear. The trouble is with the brain."

"It doesn't seem as if he ought to have a brain trouble," Honor remarked doubtfully. "Surely he never fatigued his brain. But there is a sort of mental atrophy, I believe."

One of the college professors brought her father to see Mrs. Carew. She wanted to congratulate her on having a daughter who had written such a successful book, and another who had stood so high in her classes. They should all miss Miss Carew very much.

Honor said after the fact was generally noised abroad her mother had quite an ovation.

She was very sorry to have to go to the class banquet, but she had to give a toast and respond to one. There would be another concert on the campus. And tomorrow morning would finish up everything, followed by a general dispersion.

After the two hours in the Chapel the next morning the work of devastation began. Old seniors moved out, new ones preempted rooms. Trunks and boxes went off.

There was a picturesque procession of expressmen. There were pathetic farewells, promises to write, exchange of gifts.

Aunt Tessy, and the two girls in the highest state of delight, set off on their journey with their escort. Hope was to go home with them, Sherburne to return to Washington that night.

"I've scarcely seen you at all," he said complainingly to Honor.

"O yes. You saw me in my white graduation gown, and pathetically pale pink roses. I thought we ought to have the red rose of triumph. Then I appeared again in gown and cap, academic severity."

"I liked the white gown the best."

"I wish I could have asked you to the banquet. Your smile would have graced the feast."

"If I had smiled it would have been for your sake."

"And if you had frowned it would have been for my sake too," she returned with provoking archness.

"I have been doing several things for your sake."

"As what?" She glanced up with laughing eyes.

"Governing my temper."

"There was room enough for a whole board of governors."

"What are you going to do now?" he asked presently.

"Stay home with mamma. Learn Spanish. I believe that is to be the newest accomplishment. Read over Prescott's Philip the Second. Draw up a schedule of the things I have studied."

Aunt Millicent was awaiting them at home, and Reese had returned. Randolph had passed and was to be sent to a western post to relieve the company stationed there, which was to go to Manila. And Honor's first message from her friend Agatha was that Lieutenant Westerfield

had met her on her return, and his company was ordered to San Francisco to embark for Manila, and she was simply heart-broken. She would never live to see him come back, she knew.

"It *is* awfully hard on Agatha," Honor remarked, as she read the letter to her mother.

How many times Lyndell Carew was to look back on this happy week with her son, who had passed his four years scatheless, grown in courage, manliness and love, in strength and honor. She need not fear to trust him, anywhere. But she still wondered if she could do as other mothers had done, give him up to his country.

The first panic of the war was over and had settled into steady determination to assist the oppressed at any cost. Troops were being hurried to Santiago. The Spanish fleet had at last been trapped, and there was little now to fear from the vaunted navy, though the real work was yet to be done.

Randolph longed eagerly to volunteer for Cuba at once, for he was filled with martial ardor. To go to a western post seemed like being a drone in the great hive. But he had his appointment, and for his mother's sake —

So she kissed her soldier boy with a brave heart. He had entered manhood, and had a right to his own life.

Honor was curiously impressed with Millicent.

"It seems like getting acquainted all over again," she said to her mother. "Do you suppose she has changed so much? Were all the qualities laid there like a fire ready to be kindled, but the match was wanting, the one thing that would start the flame? She has grown so much broader, finer. But I can't understand how she came to care for a man like Mr. Henderson. Yet how cheerfully she takes up her burthen! One must admire her."

Dell wondered how these children could be so dissimilar and yet have certain likenesses.

Honor went to her sister now and then of a morning. Mr. Henderson rarely rose before ten. The nurse never left him now. Sometimes for days he did not notice Millicent, then nothing could soothe him but her presence and her music. They decided not to go away, the house was commodious, the park near at hand. There was nothing now but to wait for the end. If he had inherited a constitution from either parent it might be long delayed.

"I wonder if you would like to help me go over the rest of my journal," she said one day to Honor. "After all," smiling, "I am not quite sure of myself. My one flight was a success because the subject could not fail to be so. But there are many wonderful things about India and Hindustan. I think we are going more into the real lives of nations and peoples, and coming nearer the great truths governing them, the virtues they have lost in their decline. I can't write history, but I can do descriptive work. It surprises me that I can write at all."

"It surprises me, too," said Honor frankly.

"And yet I seemed long ago to have a dumb soul within me that was hungry for something. And I longed passionately, nay, I felt whatever this was, it ought to come to me, that it was a kind of right. I think I have learned since what is meant by entering the kingdom of heaven by force, effort, that one must give of his or her share to receive again. Once I wanted to be very handsome, it seemed a Sherburne dower and I had missed it, then I longed to be a poet. I used to have such vague, beautiful thoughts, reveries, but they would fade before I could commit them to paper. I was helpless, hopeless, a prey to vain imaginings. I shut my eyes to the true perceptions of life, the outgiving, the sharing, the living

among what is best and highest instead of standing outside of it all. And then I thought a love all my own that I need not share with any one would be the most blessed gift in the whole earth. I did not study the quality of it, I who had seen so much of what was noblest in affection."

Her voice broke a little. Honor's eyes filled with tears.

"Do not pity me. I suppose God still gives one his own way, and it brings leanness to his soul. I have learned that duty is no severe and meagre-faced angel, but clothed in light, helps us to emerge from the tangle of our own making and we find the straight path, that of doing, giving, adding one's note of endeavor to the song of the world. And then to some, to many let us hope, 'these things are added.' Compensations when one reads them rightly. I could not write a poem even now. I should not attempt a story until I have learned from my own life what I can do with other lives. I am simply using my one talent gladly."

And was not love one of the talents to be used? It began in the home, it outflowed in the by-places, everywhere. There never was any too much. It did not increase by hoarding, but was meant for daily use.

It was a rich and pleasant summer, Honor found. There was so much to do. There was the growing into accord with the relationship of the new years, the womanhood that all the knowledges had been shaping and preparing.

Agatha Losee wrote her a beseeching,—meant to be heart-moving letter.

Would she not come out and spend a month and cheer her up. All the bright dreams of her life were blighted. Instead of a happy courtship and marriage, there was all

the distance and danger between them. She knew Olin would never come back, or if he did it might be broken in health or maimed. And here were all these years when she could have been enjoying so much. What did all the college course amount to anyhow? And here she was shut out of young enjoyments, for of course it would be unjust to Olin to go into society like a disengaged girl.

And so on through pages of complaining. Was this all that college discipline had done for her?

It had done more for Miss Bradford who was fast becoming Millicent's friend and adviser in many things. And was not Millicent shut out of much of the richness of life? Honor wondered at times how she could accept it so grandly.

At Thanksgiving, Della Beaumanoir called all the younger girl cousins to attend her wedding in the old church that had bidden godspeed to so many brides. Sherburne House held high festival again. Bertram was home, a fine manly fellow, full of enthusiasm for his calling, Princess and her babies, Lawrence a big boy, and the namesake Millicent a sweet attractive girl. Aunt Fanny's children were piquant and interesting. Richmond was not so far off, Della would not go out of the home interest.

Meanwhile the brilliant campaign had ended and was to make a romantic page in history. The treaty of peace had been signed, but there were many points that would require the foresight of a generous patriotic nation to settle on an honorable basis.

Sherburne had taken an eager interest in all this. His father had been called upon for counsel and opinions, and was likely to be sent out as a commissioner.

They persuaded Honor and Hope to lengthen out their

visit. There was still some of the old quaintness lingering in the atmosphere that charmed Hope Drayton. She wished Millicent Henderson could come down and study it up.

Aunt Tessy was loth to have them go, but they were also promised to the Amorys. Pearl and her husband were home, but they were now to go to Spain.

"We hope before long Sherburne will marry," Aunt Tessy said in a sweet sort of confidence to Honor. "We must go to Beaumanoir, and Leonard cannot endure the thought of shutting up this dear old home. It will be such a joy to both of us to have Sherburne's wife and children here."

"His wife! Is he ——"

"O no," with a soft, motherly laugh. "For all he was so fond of girls in his early youth he seems to take time for this important step. But we can trust him to choose wisely. He understands now what he wants, and we shall be only too glad to welcome *her*."

Why should there be a protest in Honor's soul? A stranger coming in here who could have no part nor lot in the old memories clinging about the Sherburnes, a girl to whom any other home would be as dear. Mamma's gift wasted on ——

O, that was ungenerous!

Washington was full of people. The exigencies of the country had made a busy autumn even before congress assembled. Hope Drayton was full of eager interest, and Cousin Edward spent every spare moment upon her and Honor. If only Hope was not an own cousin!

They were spending the last evening at Aunt Violet's. Hope had been playing and singing. Honor and Sherburne strayed out in the conservatory, where all was fragrance and soft lights.

"I hate to have you go," he said.

"I suppose you think iteration makes your sorrow stronger!" Honor laughed lightly and raised mirthful eyes. "You have said that a dozen times."

"Then I will say something else that will take you by surprise, I know. Honor, I love you. Will you accept it and keep it until—until you love me well enough to be my wife?"

"I—O, I know why you ask me." Her face was scarlet and she felt the tears rushing to her eyes.

"I ask you because I have come to love you very much. Almost a year ago—do you remember—at Aunt Milly's. You were so brave and sweet, and I have carried the picture you made and the sound of your voice around in my heart ever since. I have been trying to bring myself up to finer manliness for your sake ——"

"O, I cannot, I cannot!" she interrupted. "Why you must see—no self-respecting girl could! It is almost as if I had asked you for Sherburne House!"

"Any girl who loved, could. I know you have not been thinking of love all these four years. To you and to some women college life is a sort of Tennyson's Princess' experiment. Their ideals do not hurt them. But they come to a larger experience ——"

"You have railed at college girls, and—and despised their enthusiasms," she flung out.

"I have done a good many things from sheer wilfulness, and love of teasing ——"

"And there was all that old love—" how many had he loved since? She almost asked the question.

He flushed deeply. "After all," he answered with a kind of convincing gravity, "I am not sure but such an experience is a good thing for a conceited young fellow when the girl is as sensible as Gertrude Maurice was. It

taught me some useful lessons. Since then, though I have seen girls that I liked, I have never fancied any one with my whole heart until last winter. Honor, I am going to give you time to think it over. A year if you like, longer still. Until you meet some one else to love I shall hold my heart in readiness for its chosen guest. I wanted you to know this, and oh, Honor, nothing would give father and mother greater joy. If I did not love you do you suppose any figment of obligation would induce me to ask you? I count too much on love as I have seen it in my parents and yours."

He was so manly and handsome as he stood there, his dark eyes full of eloquent feeling, his very breath seeming repressed by the mysterious spell. She was bewildered. It was a curious penetrative power she had never experienced before.

"O no! no!" she cried suddenly and turned and fled. She ran up to her room and stood by the open window to cool the flame that seemed to envelop her very being. Then she was ashamed and after a few moments went down to the guests.

"Good-night," Sherburne said with some of the others. "I shall come to the station to see you off."

Honor was very gay and really effusive the next morning. Uncle Amory and Sherburne seated them in the train and provided them with creature comforts to regale themselves on their journey. Honor obstinately evaded his eyes, but he said—"Write as soon as you are home and tell me all that has happened."

The happening that had come home with a sharp pang was the word that Randolph's company had been ordered to join a regiment at San Francisco that was to sail speedily for Manila. But for the love and consoling strength of her husband Lyndell felt she would have been

utterly crushed. Had she ever given her son cordially to the country?

Daily she read over his letter until it in some sense restored her. He was not so ambitious for glory, though he was young and that did appeal to him. But to do his duty honorably, earnestly, to be not only his country's but Christ's faithful soldier to his life's end, the life that would never go out of the boundaries of God's care and love.

So Honor found immediate need for her energies. Christmas was at hand. There were souls to make glad, there were bodies to be cared for, and always the nearest and dearest to minister unto.

They sat together one afternoon doing up parcels. There were gifts for friends as well. Honor had been directing some of these. Della and Lawrence at Sherburne House, and then a flood of remembrance rushed over her. She would feel stronger and more at rest when she had mamma's sanction on what she had done.

Yet the story was harder to tell than she thought. She could confess her temper and the taunt she had given about Sherburne House.

"O, Honor, how could you!" The pain spoke in her mother's voice.

"He had tried me so, mamma. I suppose we all have Sherburne tempers that flare up and say things in the heat of the moment." Then she confessed the long silence between them, the amends she had made, the pleasant friendliness since, and his proposal. "Of course I could not accept it—I should always think ——"

Something in her mother's face startled her. It was not disappointment, hardly disapproval, but a quick light coming and then being quenched and an effort of some kind made, a flash that confessed this would have been joy.

It was all over in a minute. Lyndell bent down and kissed her daughter's forehead, clasped her arms about the girl's neck.

“Honor,” with tender solemnity—“let nothing but the purest, truest, highest love induce you to marry. For marriage is the crown of womanhood, or the heavy clanking chain that drags the soul along a sorrowful path until its day of redemption. Do not hurry out to meet love; if it is for you it will come with a glad joy you cannot mistake. Oh, my darling!”

Honor could not say *all*, that Sherburne House would be hers to leave or take for years to come. How she knew it she could not have told any one, not even herself. What mysterious power gave this thrill of certainty in Edward Sherburne? Would it cease sometime to be a disputed inheritance?

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